

Bodily and Spiritual Hygiene in Medieval and Early Modern Literature

Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture

Edited by
Albrecht Classen and Marilyn Sandidge

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Bodily and Spiritual Hygiene in Medieval and Early Modern Literature

Explorations of Textual Presentations
of Filth and Water

Edited by
Albrecht Classen

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Albrecht Classen

Introduction: Bathing, Health Care, Medicine, and Water in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Age

Modern Myths about Pre-Modern Hygiene

Unfortunately, modern, mostly negative myths about medieval and early modern conditions in the areas of hygiene, medicine, and health continue to dominate the popular understanding of the past. However, to formulate it bluntly, people in previous centuries might have used different approaches to hygiene and interpreted well-being perhaps differently than we do today, but they were neither dirty nor sickly, irrespective of high mortality rates, famines, epidemics, and perhaps underdeveloped medical care. Their societies worked well because they pursued their own hygiene and had, relatively speaking, a functioning medical system in place.¹ Differences between one country and another, between one social group and another, and differences between religions, genders, and age

¹ *Misconceptions about the Middle Ages*, ed. Stephen J. Harris and Baryon L. Grigsby. Routledge Studies in Medieval Religion and Culture, 7 (New York: Routledge, 2008). For the history of medicine in the Middle Ages, see, for instance, David C. Lindberg, *The Beginnings of Western Science: The European Scientific Tradition in Philosophical, Religious, and Institutional Context, 600 B.C. to A.D. 1450* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992); Plinio Pioreschi, *A History of Medicine*. 2nd ed. 7 vols. (Omaha: Horatius Press, 1995–2007); Vern L. Bullough, *Universities, Medicine and Science in the Medieval West*. Collected Studies, CS781 (Aldershot and Burlington, VT: Ashgate/Variorum, 2004); Luke Demaitre, *Medieval Medicine: The Art of Healing, From Head to Toe*. Praeger Series on the Middle Ages (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2013). The research on this large topic is truly legion, as scholarship in French, German, Italian, Spanish, Russian, etc. fully confirms. For an excellent summary and survey, see now Carrie Griffin, “Historiography of Medieval Medicine,” *Handbook of Medieval Studies: Terms – Methods – Trends*, ed. Albrecht Classen. Vol. 1 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2010), 651–66. In my own contribution to this volume, I address some of the modern myths about hygiene and well-being in the pre-modern world through the lens of literary sources.

Albrecht Classen, The University of Arizona, Tucson.

groups have, as to be expected, always to be taken into consideration,² but that is the same as today.

Unfortunately, we know relatively little about the daily practices of taking care of the bodily needs in the Middle Ages and the early modern age because we have fairly few documents, so it seems, addressing those issues, and because, which is probably much more accurate, modern research has not dealt with those issues to the same extent as it has done with regard to legal, religious, political, literary, art-historical, and military conditions, for instance. Again, however, this could also be said about the modern world in which only a minority of writers or artists turn their attention to such seemingly mundane aspects of everyday life, and do not include, unless driven by prurient interests, descriptions of bath scenes, not to speak of toilet matters.

Undoubtedly, today there is a whole industry in the Western world dedicated to baths, toilets, personal hygiene, and medical care, and there are many professions focused on those issues, but it would be erroneous to assume that in the past architects did not care about bathrooms, for instance, or that medical doctors ignored many of human healthcare needs, just because the records might not be specific enough. All monastic communities, for instance, had to have very clear organizational structures regarding bodily needs, including personal cleaning, defecation, health care, etc.³ Moreover, as we will see reflected in many contributions to this volume, water itself constituted a most meaningful element, both for drinking, cleaning, healing, and for spiritual transformations and epistemology.

² Britta-Juliane Kruse, *Verborgene Heilkünste: Geschichte der Frauenmedizin im Spätmittelalter. Quellen und Forschungen zur Literatur- und Kulturgeschichte*, 5 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1996).

³ *Sittengeschichte des Intimen: Bett, Korsett, Hemd, Hose, Bad, Abtritt: die Geschichte und Entwicklung der intimen Gebrauchsgegenstände*, ed. Leo Schidrowitz (Vienna: Verlag für Kulturforschung, 1926). For a very specific case, see Pia Kamber, *Die Latrinen auf dem Areal des Augustinerklosters: Basel, Augustinergasse 2, Grabung 1968*. Mit einem Beitrag zur Baugeschichte des Klosters von François Maurer (Basel: Archäologische Bodenforschung Basel-Stadt, 1995). The history of latrines has been the subject of research especially by archeologists, historians, and paleoparasitologists, see the contributions to *Sanitation, Latrines and Intestinal Parasites in Past Populations*, ed. Piers D. Mitchell (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2015). Cf. also the contribution to this volume by Belle S. Tuten. Both modern popular literature and countless websites are filled with misinformation about this topic; it belongs to the mythical concepts about the past to assume that people in the pre-modern era were dirty, unhealthy, primitive, and did not know anything about a decent toilet culture, as we are wont to embrace it today.

The Core Issues: Dirt, Filth, and Health

To highlight the critical concern of the present volume, let me formulate up front the fundamental thesis pursued both here in this introductory essay and in the subsequent articles: Dirt and filth are not the central concern for most cultural historians, but if we ignore, for instance, the world of toilets and bathrooms, and then that of medicine and healthcare, we do not do full justice to the topic of medieval and pre-modern culture, and this both in concrete material terms and in a metaphorical, religious, and philosophical context.⁴ No medicine will be of long-term good if people did not take care of their bodies, either in the form of good and nourishing food, or in the form of hygiene. Hence the contributors to this volume address a variety of sub-themes pertaining to human well-being, but as diverse as the topics might be at times, they all add up to create a complex image of the fundamental living conditions in the pre-modern world.

The contributions are concerned with reflections on and concepts of filth, water, and hygiene in medieval and early modern texts, both literary, historical, and legal. Even if the emphasis rests on the question how the literary or legal material and other textual genres contribute evidence concerning such matters as health conditions, well-being, and medicine in the pre-modern world, the volume addresses both the cultural-historical and literary dimension. We also would have to consult art-historical sources, which was unfortunately not possible here.

Historians of medicine have already done their fair share of research, but their expertise has not necessarily carried over to the many different disciplines in Medieval and Early Modern Studies. Our collective efforts will hence be focused on hygienic, medical, and physiological aspects as reflected in literary, didactic, religious texts, but then also in medical treatises. The interest will rest on bathing cultures throughout time, on spas, on general health care, and on the medical

⁴ Kay Peter Jankrift, *Mit Gott und schwarzer Magie: Medizin im Mittelalter* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2005); Heinrich Schipperges, *Der Garten der Gesundheit: Medizin im Mittelalter* (Munich: Artemis, 1985); see also the contributions to *Der Dienst am Kranken: Krankenversorgung zwischen Caritas, Medizin und Ökonomie vom Mittelalter bis zur Neuzeit. Geschichte und Entwicklung der Krankenversorgung im sozioökonomischen Wandel*. Veröffentlichungen der Historischen Kommission für Hessen, 68 (Marburg: Elwert, 2007). The list of relevant studies could easily be extended. But the present book is not specifically dealing with the history of medicine, as much as the various contributors are often touching on this topic from literary and practical perspectives. For investigations of medieval surgery, treatment of wounds, bloodletting, and medical knowledge at large, see, for instance, Piers D. Mitchell, *Medicine in the Crusades: Warfare, Wounds, and the Medieval Surgeon* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

discourse from the early Middle Ages to the eighteenth century in a larger, cultural-historical context.⁵ We can safely assume that a solid understanding of pre-modern hygiene and medicine, for instance, as reflected both in the relevant healthcare regimens and literary documents, will contribute to a deepening of our awareness about the fundamental living conditions and the corresponding discourse in fictional and factual texts in that world. In other words, this book addresses both the medical/hygienic aspect and its correspondence in the contemporary literature.

Dirt as an Epistemological Challenge

Of course, dirt matters because it is just part of all life and simply has to be taken into account as a natural component of all existence. This also applies to health, medical problems, surgeries, hospitalization, and general cleanliness. We can, in other words, gain tremendous insight into the fundamental aspects of medieval and early modern culture, that is, people's everyday lives, by studying, as the title of this book signals, hygiene, medicine, and well-being. By asking, once again, how people in the pre-modern era approached dirt, health, illness, well-being, medicine, and hygiene, we enter, only seemingly, a hidden level of all human existence. In reality, the discussion of these fundamental topics opens crucial perspectives toward the central cultural components because without health no one can exist, or exist well.

The human body cannot and must not be ignored, especially not within a cultural-historical context. As Mary Douglas pointed out, "our ideas of dirt also express symbolic systems and ... the difference between pollution behaviour in one part of the world and another is only a matter of detail."⁶ And later in her study, she highlights the other profound insight: "We cannot possibly interpret rituals concerning excreta, breast milk, saliva and the rest unless we are prepared

⁵ There is already considerable scholarship on bathing culture in antiquity; see, for instance, Marga Weber, *Antike Badekultur*. Beck's archäologische Bibliothek (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1996). Cf. also the survey article by Inge Nielsen and R. S.-H. (not listed), "Bäder," *Der neue Pauly: Enzyklopädie der Antike*, ed. Hubert Cancik and Helmut Schneider. Vol. 2 (Stuttgart and Weimar: J. B. Metzler, 1992), 397–400; Werner Heinz, "Baden, Salben und Heilen in der römischen Antike," *Augster Museumshefte*, 13 (Augst: Römermuseum, 1993). See also Stephan Busch, *Versus Balneorum: Die antike Dichtung über Bäder und Baden im römischen Reich* (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1999).

⁶ Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London and New York: Routledge, 1966), 35.

to see in the body a symbol of society, and to see the powers and dangers credited to social structure, reproduced in small, on the human body.”⁷

Human waste is as much telling as human art, it simply represents the other side of the same coin. The decrepit, sick, suffering, smelly, and disgusting body belongs as much to our existence as the well-dressed, healthy, strong, and pleasantly smelling body of an ordinary individual, which medieval artists have expressed numerous times within the framework of the “memento mori” motif, such as the painting “Bridal Pair” in the Cleveland Museum of Art and in the Musée de l’Oeuvre Notre Dame in Strasbourg, along with the back panel painting “Standing Rotting Couple,”⁸ all of them making up the “double macabre portrait.” But here we are not dealing with the motif of death, but with the question how pre-modern individuals approached hygiene, how much they resorted to baths and used water for cleaning, what role medicine played, and what constituted human happiness in the first place. In short, both hygiene and medicine have a very long history, and they shed as much, if not even more, light on cultural history as war chronicles, political narratives, Arthurian romances, etc.

Healing and well-being, for instance, are regularly associated with water, whether we think of baptism, Christ’s power over water, or the working of angels driving water toward sick people in a hospital, such as in the motif of the Pool of Bethesda, as depicted in the Pericopes in a manuscript from Regensburg, ca. 1430, today London, British Library (Egerton MS. 1122 f. 12v).⁹ Intriguingly, healing also takes place when the wounded or sick person receives clean water for washing and internal use, replenishing lost liquids. Spirituality and concrete medical and hygienic interests have regularly intertwined and supported each other.

⁷ Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger* (see note 6), 115.

⁸ Daniel Hess, *Das Gothaer Liebespaar: Ein ungleiches Paar im Gewand höfischer Minne* (Frankfurt: Fischer Taschenbuch, 1996), 20–24; Allmuth Schuttwolf et al., ed., *Jahreszeiten der Gefühle: Das Gothaer Liebespaar und die Minne im Spätmittelalter* (Ostfildern-Ruit: Verlag Gerd Hatje, 1998), 168–70; Jean Wirth, *La Jeune Fille et la Mort, Recherches sur les Thèmes Macabres dans l’art Germanique de la Renaissance* (Paris: Genève Librairie Droz, 1979), 41–43; see now Dominique DeLuca, “Bonum est mortis meditari: Meanings and Functions of the Medieval Double Macabre Portrait,” *Death and the Culture of Death in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Age*, ed. Albrecht Classen. Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture, 16 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2016), 239–61.

⁹ Jeffrey F. Hamburger and Nigel F. Palmer, *The Prayer Book of Ursula Begerin: Art-Historical and Literary Introduction*. With a Conservation Report by Ulrike Bürger. 2 vols. (Dietikon-Zürich: Urs Graf Verlag, 2015), vol. 1, 197. See also Fig. 240, showing a kind of hospital with individual sick people lying in bed, while Christ stands in front of one of them, and an angel in the background, half-immersed in a pond, moves the healing water (Hussite Codex, Prague?, ca. 1440, Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Cod. 485, fol. 28v (here p. 198).

Body and Mind: The Dialectics of Human Existence

Human life consists of both body and mind, and both require constant care, development, training, and examination. Throughout time people have always striven to grow up, to stay healthy, to thrive, and to be and to do well in general. Of course, the approaches and methods, the means and instruments applied, the medication and the treatment by a physician have changed considerably from period to period, but the fundamental concerns have remained the same. Medical doctors and other health care professionals have consistently tried their best to heal people (see the Hippocratic Oath), and in that process have closely studied the human body, its natural conditions, the environment, and the etiology of diseases.

There was, however, a considerable learning curve throughout time, and it would be foolish to idealize (or glorify) the world of hygiene and medicine in the past in contrast to the present, though we can certainly find numerous intriguing alternative concepts of significant effect in medieval *regimens* or in early modern medical recipe books. As Luke Demaitre observes,

Ever since late antiquity, the physician was characterized as ‘the servant of nature’ (*minister naturae*) ... Close to being deified, nature was considered intelligent, purposeful, almost omnipresent ... and near perfect ... Today’s yearning for things organic, together with alarm about tensions between mankind and the environment, may help us to appreciate the holistic outlook of earlier times. Everything, including the human body, was connected in the vastness of the universe and in the cycle of life.¹⁰

The body, as we know, constantly ingests, digests, and excretes in rhythmical manner, which requires cultural historians to consider not only the external fea-

¹⁰ Demaitre, *Medieval Medicine* (see note 1), 15. See also Alain Touwaide, “Medicine,” *Handbook of Medieval Culture: Fundamental Aspects and Conditions of the European Middle Ages*, ed. Albrecht Classen. Vol. 2 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2015), 954–98; esp. 973–77. For a broad overview, see Lawrence I. Conrad, Michael Neve, Vivian Nutton, Roy Porter, and Andrew Wear, *The Western Medical Tradition. 800 BC to AD 1800* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Melitta Weiss Adamson, *Medieval Dietetics*. German Studies in Canada, 5 (Frankfurt a. M., Berlin, et al.: Peter Lang, 1995); *Western Medical Thought from Antiquity to the Middle Ages*, ed. Mirko D. Grmek (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998); Joseph Ziegler, *Medicine and Religion c. 1300: The Case of Arnau de Vilanova* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998); Nancy G. Siraisi, *Medieval and Early Renaissance Medicine: An Introduction to Knowledge and Practice* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2007). Many contributions to the present volume extend our understanding of medieval medicine further in a variety of details. At the end of this Introduction I will provide critical summaries of each, adding further references and elaborations, where appropriate.

tures of human existence, but also the internal ones, hence the material conditions on a truly basic level. In that regard the study of hygiene and the dangers of lacking or absent hygiene serves extremely well to grasp what past cultures were like. According to Gerhard Jaritz,

the research into shit, defecation, excrement, latrines, and also dirt and waste is not very popular and common in Medieval Studies, as in a number of other fields too, as, for instance, anthropology or literary and art historical studies.¹¹

Nevertheless, we can clearly observe a growing interest in such marginal (marginalized) and yet also central matters because they might or can inform us much more about mundane, trivial, banal, and yet also important aspects of human life in the past than, for instance, official records or chronicles.¹² Recent research into medieval and early modern toilets hence signals a real paradigm shift in this regard because human waste is endemic to human existence, and we cannot simply turn our attention away from it without putting on dangerous and unnecessary epistemological blinders.

As G. Ulrich Großmann correctly underscores, people throughout time have certainly enjoyed assembling at and talking during meals, and also delighted in

¹¹ Gerhard Jaritz, “Excrement and Waste,” *Handbook of Medieval Culture: Fundamental Aspects and Conditions of the European Middle Ages*, ed. Albrecht Classen. Vol. 1 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2015), 406–14; here 406. See also *Sanitation, Latrines and Intestinal Parasites in Past Populations*, ed. Piers D. Mitchell (see note 3). The contributors take a broad approach, studying the history of sanitation and the impact of parasites on human health all over the world from pre-history to the late Middle Ages, and occasionally even the nineteenth century. Since people tended to associate health with fresh smell – see the highly popular miasma theory – and the absence of nuisance sights, and were not really cognizant of the presence and workings of parasites, true sanitation was neither present in ancient Rome nor in fifteenth-century London (see the study by Craig Taylor, “A Tale of Two Cities: The Efficacy of Ancient and Medieval Sanitation Methods,” *Sanitation, Latrines and Intestinal Parasites*, 69–97).

¹² See, for instance, *Fecal Matters in Early Modern Literature and Art: Studies in Scatology*, ed. Jeff Persels and Russell Ganim. Studies in European Cultural Transition, 21 (Aldershot, Hampshire, and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004); Daniel Furrer, *Wasserthron und Donnerbalken: Eine kleine Kulturgeschichte des stillen Örtchens* (Darmstadt: Primus Verlag, 2004); Valerie Allen, *On Farting: Language and Laughter in the Middle Ages*. The New Middle Ages (New York and Hounds Mills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); see also the contributions to *Evolution of Sanitation and Wastewater Technologies Through the Centuries*, ed. A. N. Angelakis (London: IWA Publisher, 2014).

⁹ G. Ulrich Großmann, “Zur Baugeschichte des Abtritts,” *Aborte im Mittelalter und der Frühen Neuzeit: Bauforschung, Archäologie, Kulturgeschichte*, ed. Olaf Wagener. Studien zur internationalen Architektur- und Kunstgeschichte, 117 (Petersberg: Michael Imhof Verlag, 2014), 13–22.

discussing food at large, but the consequences of the ingestion, that is, waste and waste disposal, have regularly been passed over in silence because it has normally been regarded with embarrassment and even shame.¹³ Toilets are normally places of solitude, perhaps with the exception of those in monasteries and other communities, as Belle S. Tuten informs us in her contribution to this volume.¹⁴ They are necessary, but kept on the side or away from the normal living spaces for basic health reasons because human waste is normally identified as toxic, smelly, and highly unpleasant. Nevertheless, to get rid of excrement is just as important for life as is ingesting food for our nourishment; it's all part of the same system, since health has much to do with balance, in-take, release of detritus, and cleansing. Imbalance in that regard can be life-threatening.

Even though we tend to feel disgust, there is nothing really dirty about it at all; nature takes care of it after a while because 'dirt' is a rather subjective term and does not make much sense in an ecocritical context. Only humans really tend to demarcate their civilized spaces as preserved for cleanliness and order, whereas in nature the situation is very different, entirely oriented toward sustainability, resources, decomposition, and rebirth.¹⁵

The Body and Cultural History

Cultural historians have already discussed the tensions between wilderness and cultivated spaces as perceived and discussed in pre-modern discourses,¹⁶ and this entire dialectical concept can be transferred to the private sphere as well since dirt, filth, bodily fluids, feces, etc. tend to undermine the human sense of self, culture, order, sophistication, self-respect, and ingenuity, as the figure of Death proclaims so powerfully in the twenty-fourth chapter of Johannes von Tepl's *Der Ackermann* (ca. 1400):

¹³ G. Ulrich Großmann, "Zur Baugeschichte des Abtritts," *Aborte im Mittelalter und der Frühen Neuzeit: Bauforschung, Archäologie, Kulturgeschichte*, ed. Olaf Wagener. Studien zur internationalen Architektur- und Kunstgeschichte, 117 (Petersberg: Michael Imhof Verlag, 2014), 13–22.

¹⁴ "The Necessitas Naturae and Monastic Hygiene."

¹⁵ David R. Montgomery, *Dirt: The Erosion of Civilizations* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2007); Heather I. Sullivan, "Dirt Theory and Material Ecocriticism," *Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment* 19.3 (Summer 2012): 515–31.

¹⁶ Peter Dinzelbacher, "Die Symbolik des Wilden und des Gezähmten im Mittelalter: Ein Beitrag zum 'Prozess der Zivilisation,'" *Symbolon* 19 (2014): 285–319.

a human is conceived in sin, nourished with impure, unspeakable feculence in the maternal body, born naked and smeared like a beehive; a mass of refuse, a churn of filth, a dish for worms, a stinkhouse, a repulsive washtub, a rancid carcass, a mildewed crate, a bottomless sack, a perforated pocket, a bellows, a rapacious maw, a reeking flagon of urine, a malodorous pail, a deceptive marionette-show, a loamy robber's den, an insatiably slaking trough, a painted delusion. Let recognise who will: every human created to completion has nine holes in his body; out of all these there flows such repellent filth that nothing could be more impure.¹⁷

This detritus reminds us, when we are confronted by it, of our corporeality and draw us back into the foundational framework of nature in the biological sense of the word. Cultural history, however, without regard to human (and natural) biology would be hollow and rather one-sided, deceiving us about the true complexities of the issue at stake.

Dirt as a Cultural Entity *Par Excellence*

In her seminal study, *Purity and Danger*, Mary Douglas already alerted us to the critical problem identifying dirt with defilement and absence of hygiene. As she remarks,

dirt is essentially disorder. There is no such thing as absolute dirt; it exists in the eye of the beholder. If we shun dirt, it is not because of craven fear, still less dread of holy terror ... Dirt offends against order. Eliminating it is not a negative movement, but a positive effort to organise the environment.¹⁸

From her anthropological point-of-view, eliminating dirt is a cultural process, not necessarily driven by hygienic needs: "... it is a creative movement, an attempt to relate form to function, to make unity of experience."¹⁹

However, Douglas then moves into much larger issues pertaining to social order, hierarchy, religion, and culture, and discusses the relationship between

¹⁷ Johannes de Tepla, civis Zicensis, *Epistola cum Libello Ackerman; und, Das Büchlein Ackerman / nach der Freiburger Hs. 163 und nach der Stuttgarter Hs. HB X 23*, ed. and trans. (into modern German) by Karl Bertau (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1994); for an English translation; see <http://www.michaelhaldane.com/HusbandmanandDeath> (last accessed on June 30, 2016).

¹⁸ Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London and New York: Routledge, 1966), 2.

¹⁹ Douglas, *Purity and Danger* (see note 6), 2.

religious ritual and hygiene, as this can be observed amongst many non-western peoples, but then also in the modern world, though then without any clear awareness of the underlying ritual functions.²⁰ Pressing the issue further, Douglas comments, “I am going to argue that our ideas of dirt also express symbolic systems and that the difference between pollution behaviour in one part of the world and another is only a matter of detail.”²¹ Even if we are no longer concerned with religious conditions when removing dirt, it is clear that dirt, defined as such, reflects on a system around it: “Dirt is the by-product of a systematic ordering and classification of matter, in so far as ordering involves rejecting inappropriate elements.”²²

All this matters for us here especially because the question concerns the larger issue of hygiene, medicine, and health in the pre-modern western world. Contrary to popular opinions, people have always worked hard to establish and pursue any possible personal cleaning opportunities, and those are associated with medicine, and hence with health. The contributions to this volume thus aim at uncovering multiple layers of fundamental aspects of human culture in the European world prior to 1800, addressing both hygiene and physical well-being, both from a medical and a spiritual perspective, regularly expressed in literary texts.

Health, Hygiene, and Well-Being from Late Antiquity through the Middle Ages

Even though there is a general, certainly naïve and erroneous assumption that everything was better during the Roman Empire and that with the arrival of the Germanic people and thus the beginning of the early Middle Ages a dark age fell upon the earth, we have to question this both broadly and in detail, since so much depends on location, cultural areas, individual people, economic conditions, and the educational level within a certain society. Comparing the classical world with the medieval era might be like comparing apples with oranges, so it would be better to look at what we actually know and how we can approach our

²⁰ Douglas, *Purity and Danger* (see note 6), 33.

²¹ Douglas, *Purity and Danger* (see note 6), 36.

²² Douglas, *Purity and Danger* (see note 6), 36.

global topic with as much objectivity as possible, beginning with the situation in the early Middle Ages.²³

Water in Cultural-Historical Terms

At this point it deserves to be noted that throughout the entire history of the Christian Church water mattered profoundly, signifying both life (baptism) and death (deluge, that is, sinfulness, destruction), as we can observe both in the biblical texts and in the writings of the Church Fathers and subsequent theologians. Countless religious images confirm this dialectical approach to water, which has always symbolized the two extremes of human existence.²⁴ Expressions by saintly figures concerning a disgust of the body, and hence deliberate strategies to avoid cleaning the body, would have to be understood against the foil of a functioning health system in order to underscore the individual's exceptionality and holiness.

History of Bathing

This approach toward a history of hygiene, medicine, and well-being is most easily pursued if we focus on bathing at first, which I myself will investigate at greater length in my contribution to this volume.²⁵ Fortunately, we can already

²³ Gerd Althoff, "Finsternes Mittelalter?! Zur Dekonstruktion eines Klischees," *Farbe im Mittelalter: Materialität – Medialität – Semantik*, ed. Ingrid Bennewitz and Andrea Schindler. Akten des 13. Symposiums des Mediävistenverbandes vom 1. bis 5. März 2009 in Bamberg. Vol. 1 (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2011), 47–63. See also the contributions to *Fiktion Dunkles Mittelalter*, ed. Heribert Illig (Gräfelfing: Mantis Verlag, 1994). Thomas E. Woods, *How the Catholic Church Built Western Civilization* (Washington, DC: Regnery Publ., 2005).

²⁴ Heimo Reinitzer, "Wasser des Todes und Wasser des Lebens: Über den geistigen Sinn des Wassers im Mittelalter," *Kulturgeschichte des Wassers*, ed. Hartmut Böhme (Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1988), 99–144. I am currently preparing a monograph on *Water in Medieval Literature*, in which I am engaging with this topic at much greater length than I can do here (to appear with Lexington Books, 2017).

²⁵ "The 'Dirty Middle Ages': Bathing and Cleanliness in the Middle Ages. With an Emphasis on Medieval German Courtly Romances and Early Modern Novels: Another Myth-Buster." Consult also the studies by Christopher R. Clason and Rosa A. Perez in this volume. See also the contributions to *The Nature and Function of Water, Baths, Bathing, and Hygiene from Antiquity through the Renaissance*, ed. Cynthia Kosso and Anne Scott. *Technology and Change in History*, 11 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2009). They are grouped under the following headings: gender roles, attitudes,

rely on excellent older research in this area, although many of the really important contributions from the early twentieth century and earlier have become obscure and forgotten by many scholars today. Alfred Martin, for instance, published as early as 1906 an astoundingly rich volume on bathing cultures in the pre-modern world of Germany, in which he assembled much valuable material that we only need to review again in light of more modern editions and critical perspectives in order to realize how far ahead he was, actually, for his time with regard to the history of hygiene.²⁶

Already during the time of the Merovingians, the *Lex Alemannorum* and the *Lex Bajuvariorum* mention bath houses or bathrooms, while steam baths, like modern-day saunas, seem to have been quite common also in the Slavic areas (Martin, 1–4).²⁷ The famous sketch for the St. Gall monastery contains also sections for bath houses. Various early medieval texts such as the Latin *Ruodlieb* epic poem (ca. 1030) provide rather detailed information about bathing arrangements, particularly before major holidays, but various times we learn from monastic rules that bathing was permitted only occasionally to intensify the rigor of the monastic life in veneration of God. Such artificial limitations, however, only make sense if ordinary, lay people had plenty of opportunities and enjoyed taking baths and tended to clean their bodies as often as necessary (Martin, 8–9).

Many times we hear of higher-ranking clerics or nobles who, when they felt guilty of some transgressions or wanted to demonstrate publicly their sinfulness, provided baths for the poor and needy, if not even the sick ones, whom they cleaned and shaved with their own hands (Martin, 8–9). These included such famous figures as the bishops of Mainz and Utrecht, Empress Kunegunde (wife of Emperor Henry I), Saint Elisabeth of Thuringia, and others (Martin, 9).²⁸ When the Bishop of Lüttich (d. 1037) announced that he would no longer take a bath, or when St. Elisabeth declared that dipping a foot into a bath would be enough for

practices, and innovations in baths and bathing (from antiquity through the early modern age); water and the formation of identity and policy; ancient and medieval water sources and resources; and religious and literary imagery.

26 Alfred Martin, *Deutsches Badewesen in vergangenen Tagen: Nebst einem Beitrag zur Geschichte der deutschen Wasserheilkunde* (Jena: Eugen Diederichs, 1906).

27 See also Achim Thomas Hack, *Alter, Krankheit und Herrschaft im frühen Mittelalter. Monographien zur Geschichte des Mittelalters*, 56 (Stuttgart Hiersemann, 2009); cf. also the contributions to *Das Lorscher Arzneibuch und die frühmittelalterliche Medizin: Verhandlungen des Medizinhistorischen Symposiums im September 1989 in Lorsch*, ed. Gundolf Keil. *Geschichtsblätter Kreis Bergstraße*, Sonderband, 12 (Lorsch: Verlag Laurissa, 1991).

28 Zappert, “Über das Badewesen mittelalterlicher und späterer Zeit,” *Archiv für Kunde österreichischer Geschichtsquellen* 21 (1859): 3–166.

her (Martin, 9), then these were not reflections of a lacking hygiene overall in that society, but, by clear contrast, a confirmation how much bathing belonged to the standard culture also at that time. Those saints or other famous figures used the existence of a presumably well established hygienic culture in order to increase their own religious or ascetic reputations.

Already Charlemagne (d. 814) was reported as having enjoyed hot baths and the activity of swimming. His biographer Einhard comments, sometime after 817, as follows:

[Charles] also liked the steam produced by natural hot springs and the exercise that came from swimming frequently. He was so good at swimming that no one was considered better than him. For this reason [that is, the existence of the hot springs], he built his palace in Aachen and lived there permanently during the final years of his life until he died. He invited not only his sons to the baths, but also his nobles and friends. Sometimes he invited such a crowd of courtiers and bodyguards, that there might be more than a hundred people bathing together.²⁹

In fact, as this and many other documents confirm, physical exercise, personal hygiene, active pursuit of a healthy lifestyle were not uncommon. The evidence from the world of the Carolingians, that is, from the members of the royal class, projects a lively picture and entirely contradicts many foolish concepts we might have today about the early Middle Ages.³⁰ We could easily extend this approach to the time of medieval knighthood, since every knight had to have an able and strong body, which could only be achieved through intensive physical training and careful observation of hygiene and health care.³¹

In the following section of his investigations, Martin quickly moves into the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, when satirists and social critics formulated countless comments about the morally debilitating effects of bathing, especially when men and women took a bath together. But he also alerts us to one of the most famous courtly depictions of a bath, that of Sir Jacob of Warte in the *Manesse* manuscript from the first third of the fourteenth century (Martin, 14).³²

²⁹ Einhard, “The Life of Charlemagne,” *Charlemagne’s Courtier: The Complete Einhard*, ed. and trans. Paul Edward Dutton (2000; Peterborough, Ont.: Broadview Press, 2006), 15–30; here 30–31.

³⁰ Achim Thomas Hack, *Karolingische Kaiser als Sportler: Ein Beitrag zur frühmittelalterlichen Körpergeschichte*. Jenaer mediävistische Vorträge, 4 (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2015).

³¹ In my own contribution to this volume I will investigate this aspect especially with regard to the literary-historical evidence.

³² For a comprehensive introduction to this manuscript, see now Lothar Voetz, *Der Codex Manesse: Die berühmteste Liederhandschrift des Mittelalters* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2015). His bibliography lists the relevant editions and studies. Here I consulted

Here we see an obviously somewhat older knight sitting in a large tub situated under a great deciduous tree, probably a lime tree. Two standing ladies and one kneeling lady tend to him, one placing a garland of flowers on his head, the other extending a chalice with wine (?) to him, while the third, somewhat behind the tub, is massaging his right arm. A maid operates a manual bellow to feed the fire underneath a huge kettle, which apparently serves to supply more hot water for the tub.

As topical as the entire scene might be, the artist was certainly interested in integrating a normal situation in the life of his patrons, such as taking a bath, although everything is tinged in erotic colors. The age discrepancy between the naked man and the young maids is remarkable, but the setting certainly evokes the time of May when love begins to bloom again according to ancient traditions. Taking a bath in the month of May was regularly regarded as most advisable because of its great health effects, as many authors commented throughout the late Middle Ages (Martin, 11–23). The author subsequently follows the cultural history of bathing far into the modern age and can thus trace a continuous tradition from the early Germanic world in the second or third centuries to the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

He also alerts us to the two different strategies in trying to gain health through the power of water, either by taking a hot bath or a cold bath. The use of cold water, or even of snow or ice, in the case of frost bites and related sufferings as a counter-measure was widely known and applied since the high Middle Ages (Martin, 33–34). The particular properties of the water in a baptismal font would not need any further discussion, while the employment of cold water in a large vessel to determine the guilt of an accused adds another component regarding the symbolic significance of water. However, already Emperor Louis the Pious issued a strict ban against such legal procedures in 823, but it was practiced even hundreds of years after that (Martin, 35). Moreover, there is much information about the great interest in swimming in rivers or lakes, and this already since the earliest time in late antiquity and then throughout the Middle Ages (Martin, 39–45).

Codex Manesse: Die Miniaturen der Großen Heidelberger Liederhandschrift, ed. and explained by Ingo F. Walther together with Gisela Siebert (Frankfurt a. M.: Insel, 1988), 40–41. For a discussion of nakedness, shame, and baths in medieval literature, see Albrecht Classen, “Naked Men in Medieval German Literature and Art: Anthropological, Cultural–Historical, and Mental–Historical Investigations,” *Sexuality in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times: New Approaches to a Fundamental Cultural–Historical and Literary–Anthropological Theme*, ed. Albrecht Classen. Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture, 3 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2008), 143–69.

Martin subsequently explores topics such as private baths, public baths, bathing in the late Middle Ages and in the early modern age, mineral baths, health baths in the post-medieval period, and modern balneology. All these aspects are well documented and illustrated, considering the 700 endnotes and 159 illustrations. Contrary to common assumptions today, then, relying on Martin's observations and conclusions we can affirm without doubt that the pre-modern world was fully aware of the need to pay close attention to personal hygiene, and also of the pleasures which resulted from the exercise of the body through swimming and taking baths. And how else could it have been? There are simple physio-biological conditions that must be met for an entire society to exist and thrive. Cleanliness is not really a matter of cultural choice, but a *conditio sine qua non*, even though there are countless strategies and decisions either to report about it or not. Of course, bathing has also always served aesthetic purposes, to increase one's bodily beauty, as was already addressed in the Old Testament where we can read about Bathsheba taking a bath when she is observed by King David who then immediately lusts after her (2 Samuel 11).

Even though, as Elizabeth Archibald notes, “[f]or medieval theologians David symbolised Christ, and Bathsheba the Church washing off worldly dirt to be worthy of the Bridegroom, so that her bathing was in fact aimed at spiritual beauty,”³³ both the illuminators and commentators still could not hide the basic therapeutic or health-oriented purpose of Bathsheba taking a bath. Despite the fact that numerous clerical authors criticized this emphasis on the body, allowing it to be cleaned in a hot bath, the evidence for public, later even private baths throughout pre-modern Europe is overwhelming. Moreover, the New Testament contains significant references to the bath as a place where miraculous healing takes place, such as the pool of Bethesda in John 5:1–9, where Jesus heals a man.

Early Christian authors such as Clemens of Alexandria (d. after 211) voiced very positive opinions about bathing and personal hygiene and ridiculed pagan priests who abstained from cleaning themselves as a false sign of their holiness.³⁴ Countless comments by early medieval theological writers underscore the ubiquity of baths, fountains, wells, and fonts that served both for private cleaning and for spiritual cleansing. As Johannes Zellinger confirms, the ceremony of hand washing before, during, and after a liturgical process derived from ancient

³³ Elizabeth Archibald, “Bathing for Beauty in the Middle Ages,” *The Recovery of Beauty: Arts, Culture, Medicine*, ed. Corinne Saunders, Jane Macnaughton, and David Fuller (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 53–71; here 55.

³⁴ Johannes Zellinger, *Bad und Bäder in der altchristlichen Kirche: Eine Studie über Christentum und Antike* (Munich: Max Huebner, 1928), 9–11.

customs, but also reflected the true extent of a bathing and hygiene culture already in the early Middle Ages.³⁵ The architectural and technical sophistication of the Roman time was probably not maintained on quite the same level in the subsequent periods, but washing oneself regularly, and the luxury of hot and cold water were certainly greatly appreciated and realized wherever and whenever the necessary material resources were available. Even the Christian Church did not change this at all, on the contrary, despite many, but certainly extreme statements regarding personal attempts to fight the body in order to help the soul, beginning with refraining from personal hygiene.

Of course, if we pay primary attention to what some of the Church Fathers and other clerical/religious authors such as the encyclopedic Isidore of Seville (560–636) had to say about baths, we might easily fall into the trap of post-medieval myth-making, projecting a highly unclean, even filthy world where every effort was made to chastise the body and to withhold medical and hygienic treatments. Much depends on the genre in which authors expressed themselves, since when we focus on theological and mystical treatises, on hagiography and religious biographies, the very opposite of health, beauty, and physical happiness is advocated in order to liberate the spirit and to defend the soul from the devil's temptations. When we turn, however, to erotic literature from the high and late Middle Ages, whether to courtly romances or verse narratives, such as *fabliaux* or *mären*, the very opposite is commonly the case, as when the French dauphin, Duke Charles d'Orléans (1394–1465) publicly praised the virtues and pleasantries of baths and dinners in those locations.³⁶ Whenever we hear of more intimate situations in people's private lives, we can detect important references to personal health-care and hygiene, and this throughout the Middle Ages and certainly in the following periods.

Hygiene, the Bathroom, and the Sick: The Development of the Medieval Hospital

As we observed already above, there is a global tendency not to mention defecation and urination in literary sources. But although public narratives such as chronicle accounts and political documents do not normally concern themselves with such matters, we can be certain that the pre-modern world had a great inter-

³⁵ Zellinger, *Bad und Bäder* (see note 34), 102–06, et passim.

³⁶ Archibald, "Bathing for Beauty" (see note 33), 60–68.

est in and need of taking care of their own bodies, whether in the healthy or the sick stage. If the entire topic has so much to do with ordering, as Mary Douglas highlighted, then we only have to look more carefully where the detritus has been moved, by whom, with what purpose, and how then the sanitized body or space is perceived, especially in the pre-modern era this book is occupied with.

One great opportunity to study this subject matter consists of focusing on the famous Saint Elisabeth/Elizabeth of Thuringia/Hungary (1207–1231) because she was the founder of a hospital and is closely associated with the systematic treatment of sick people. We can and must talk as much about hygiene as about medicine, and subsequently about well-being as fundamental social-historical components of society at large also in the Middle Ages, so Elisabeth's workings and efforts to help the sick can be a valuable starting point for the larger discussion which will follow subsequently in the individual contributions.

This Hungarian princess, daughter of King András II (1177–1235) and his wife Gertrude of Merania (1185–1213), was married to Louis IV, Landgrave of Thuringia, in 1221. However, he died very young, when being on route to the sixth crusade in 1227, whereupon she left the Wartburg in Eisenach (Thuringia) and moved to Marburg, where she founded a hospital, continuing the same charitable work which she had already begun in Eisenach when her husband had still been alive. But Elisabeth accepted the harsh rules of her Franciscan confessor, Konrad of Marburg, and died, perhaps as a consequence of excessive fasting and self-castigation, in 1231. Already in 1235 she was canonized, and this rather quickly, as the result of Konrad's energetic efforts to promote her sanctity through numerous biographical accounts, which he commissioned from Dietrich von Apolda, and other testimonies.³⁷

As we can read, for instance, here drawing from the German translation printed by Matthes Maler in Erfurt in 1520, people were shocked about her self-humiliation when she did not shy away from nursing and taking care of even the sickest and dirtiest patients, although she was the daughter of the Hungarian king. As Elisabeth is said to have answered, “Ich en thu nicht die wergke durch mich sunder in mir ist wirgken vnd thun die gnade gots Die dingk ich thun / seynt nicht schnoede sunder gots wunderwergke vnd artzneye / sprach nicht das da stynckt dar durch gereyniget werden die hertzen” (I I do not do those works for

³⁷ *Die Vita der heiligen Elisabeth des Dietrich von Apolda*, ed. Monika Rener. Veröffentlichungen der Historischen Kommission für Hessen, 53 (Marburg: N. G. Elwert Verlag, 1993); Esther Meier, *Handbuch der Heiligen* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2010), 146–48; Michel Aaij, “Saint Elisabeth of Thuringia, 1207–2007,” *A Journal of Early Medieval Northwestern Europe* 10 (2007): <http://www.heroicage.org/issues/10/bio2.html> (last accessed on June 30, 2016).

myself but God's grace works and performs through me. The things that I do are not miserable but God's miracles and medicine; so do not say that it is smelling badly since the hearts will be cleaned thereby).³⁸

Sanctity and health care went hand in hand in her case, but she was certainly not the first person to make a major effort to provide medical treatment to the sick. In fact, most medieval monasteries were not only spiritual communities, but also included, apart from their library, scriptorium, garden, etc., also a hospital for the sick brothers or sisters. Monastic herbals, made most famous by the Benedictine magistra Hildegard of Bingen, had a tremendous influence on medieval society, and considering the intense network of monasteries throughout Europe, we can safely argue that people in the pre-modern era were not simply abandoned to their sicknesses or illnesses and had many resources available to gain help.³⁹ Elisabeth, however, was the first woman to establish a hospital for the public, even though she subsequently succumbed to the hard work and to the constant exposure to bacteria and viruses from her patients.⁴⁰

38 *Das Leben der heiligen Elisabeth von Thüringen: Cronica sant Elisabet zcu Deutsch* (Erfurt, Matthes Maler, 1520), ed. with an intro. by Herbert Hömig (Bad Neustadt a. d. Saale: Verlag Dietrich Pfaehler, 1981). Norbert Ohler, *Elisabeth von Thüringen: Fürstin im Dienst der Niedrigsten*. Persönlichkeit und Geschichte, 114/115. 2nd. rev. ed. (1984; Göttingen and Zürich: Muster-Schmidt, 1992); Daria Barow-Vassilevitch, *Elisabeth von Thüringen: Heilige, Minnekönigin, Rebellin* (Ostfildern: Thorbecke, 2007); see now Linda Burke, "A Sister in the World: Saint Elizabeth of Hungary in the Golden Legend," *Hungarian Historical Review* 5.3 (2016): 1–27 (I thank the author for sharing her study with me even before the ultimate publication). The research and popular literature on Elisabeth is, of course, expansive. Many hospitals all over the world are named after her, such as the Saint Elizabeth's Health Center, Tucson, Arizona.

39 See the contribution to this volume by Debra L. Stoudt. There is a whole legion of popular, quasi-scholarly studies on Hildegard of Bingen's medical recipes and general advice on maintaining one's health; cf., for instance, Wighard Strehlow, *Die große Heilkunde der Hildegard von Bingen: Gesundheit, Ernährung, Edelsteinkunde; Die Ernährungstherapie der Hildegard von Bingen* (Stuttgart: Lüchow, 2005). For critical, scholarly perspectives, see the contributions to *Heilkunde im Mittelalter*, ed. Ortrun Riha. *Das Mittelalter*, 10 (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2005); Victoria Sweet, *Rooted in the Earth, Rooted in the Sky: Hildegard of Bingen and Premodern Medicine*. Studies in Medieval History and Culture (New York: Routledge, 2006).

40 Much has been written about Elisabeth, such as by Reinhold Schneider, *Elisabeth von Thüringen*. Insel Taschenbuch, 1118 (Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1997); Ernst W. Wies, *Elisabeth von Thüringen: Die Provokation der Heiligkeit* (Esslingen and Munich: Bechtle Verlag, 1993). See also the excellent catalogue for the exhibition dedicated to her, *Sankt Elisabeth: Fürstin, Dienerin, Heilige: Aufsätze, Dokumentation, Katalog* (Sigmaringen: Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 1981). See also Daria Barow-Vassilevitch, *Elisabeth von Thüringen: Heilige, Minnekönigin, Rebellin* (Ostfildern: Thorbecke, 2007); Wilfried Warsitzka, *Elisabeth: Königstochter, Landgräfin und Heilige* (Jena: Bussert & Stadeloer, 2007); Christa Bertelsmeier-Kierst, *Elisabeth von Thüringen und die neue Frömmigkeit in Europa* (Frankfurt a. M., New York, et al.: Peter Lang, 2008).

She is often depicted in manuscript illustrations and in frescoes working in the hospital and providing care to the sick, which signals the fundamental combination of spirituality and medicine, or the curative treatment of the body along with the treatment of the mind. Numerous chroniclers reflected on her contributions to the new lay piety emerging in the wake of the rise of the Franciscan Order,⁴¹ and she was particularly praised for her personal efforts to practice what she was preaching, or what she had embraced as the principle of her own spirituality.

The Growth of the Medieval Hospital

Elisabeth had founded a first hospital already in Gotha in 1223 in order to help the famished and starving population of the settlement below the Wartburg (today Eisenach) suffering from the severe winter in 1226/1227 during her husband's absence. But the term 'hospital' is misleading in this context, since the medieval meaning entailed much more than just medical treatment.⁴² Instead, the institution intended, at its implicit goals, to feed the hungry, to give refreshment to the thirsty, to offer a place to stay to the travelers, to provide clothing, to treat the sick, and to bury the dead. These were the six, later seven works of mercy, preached by Christ according to Matthew 25:34–40, to which also belonged the mercy to ransom the captives. All of these were perhaps best illustrated by the Master of Alkmaar, who created wooden panels for the Church of Saint Lawrence in Alkmaar, Netherlands, ca. 1540.⁴³

Those were then coupled with the seven works of spiritual mercy: To instruct the ignorant; to counsel the doubtful; to admonish sinners; to bear wrongs patiently; to forgive offences willingly; to comfort the afflicted; and to pray for

⁴¹ *Elisabeth von Thüringen: die Mutter der Armen*, essay by Walter Nigg, images by Helmuth Nils Loose, and a contribution by Maria Schaeffler (Freiburg i. Br., Basel, and Vienna: Herder, 1979).

⁴² *Das Hospital am Beginn der Neuzeit: soziale Reform in Hessen im Spiegel europäischer Kulturgeschichte: zum 500. Geburtstag Landgraf Philipps des Großmütigen*, ed. Arnd Friedrich. Historische Schriften des Landeswohlfahrtsverbandes Hessen: Quellen und Studien, 11 (Petersberg: Imhof, 2004).

⁴³ Max J. Friedländer, *Die altniederländische Malerei*. Vol. 10: *Lucas van Leyden und andere holländische Meister seiner Zeit* (Berlin: Cassirer, 1932); Carl Ernst Köhne, *Belgien und die Niederlande: Landschaft, Geschichte, Kultur* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1965); see also online: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/f/fd/Werken_van_Barmhartigheid%2C_Meester_van_Alkmaar_%281504%29.jpg (last accessed on June 30, 2016).

the living and the dead.⁴⁴ How much Elisabeth was personally involved in the building of the hospital in Marburg, or whether her Confessor, Konrad, can be credited with the financing and the supervision of the actual construction, does not need to be discussed here. At any rate, Elisabeth was the *spiritus rector*, and on her behalf the hospital was dedicated to Saint Francis, which was thereby the first Franciscan patrocinium north of the Alps.⁴⁵

In fact, many more hospitals then sprang up all over medieval Europe, which thus allows us to investigate further the intense efforts everywhere in the pre-modern world to improve and intensify health-care for ever wider circles of people.⁴⁶ Amazingly, Elisabeth was only twenty-one years of age when she moved from the Wartburg to Marburg in order to dedicate her life to the care of such ostracized sick people as lepers, who had to be settled at a safe distance from the major towns or villages out of fear that they could infect other people. They were also not allowed to participate personally in the church services and could only listen in to the mass and the performance of the liturgy through a leper's squint (hagioscope), such as in the cathedral of Limerick, Ireland (founded in 1168). The fear of infection through touch ruled supreme, as Erin S. Lynch discusses further in her contribution to this volume.

Only in 1179 the papal canon *De leprosis* had regulated the lepers' lifestyle and ordered that they had to be removed from the centers of society for safety reasons. This stipulation also applied to the hospital established by Elisabeth, since it was

⁴⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Works_of_mercy (last accessed on June 30, 2016).

⁴⁵ Wies, *Elisabeth von Thüringen* (see note 40), 148–51; see also Werner Moritz, "Das Hospital der heiligen Elisabeth in seinem Verhältnis zum Hospitalwesen des frühen 13. Jahrhunderts," *Sankt Elisabeth*, 1981 (see note 40), 101–16.

⁴⁶ Jesko von Steynitz, *Mittelalterliche Hospitäler der Orden und Städte als Einrichtungen der sozialen Sicherung*. Sozialpolitische Schriften, 26 (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1970); A. Karenberg, "Hospitäler in Prag vom Hochmittelalter bis zur Aufklärung (1135–1800)," *Sudhoffs Archiv für Geschichte der Medizin und der Naturwissenschaften* 79.1 (1995): 73–100; Peregrine Horden, *Hospitals and Healing from Antiquity to the Later Middle Ages*. Variorum Collected Studies Series, 881 (Aldershot et al.: Ashgate, 2008); G, Réveillas and D. Castex, "Biologie et coutumes funéraires: Les établissements hospitaliers du Moyen Age et de l'époque moderne: état d'une recherche en cours," *Bulletins et mémoires de la Société d'anthropologie de Paris* 22.1 (2010): 74–83; M. Pauly, "The Placing of Hospitals in Middle Ages Meuse and Ardennes," *Revue Belge de Philologie et d'Histoire* 89.2 (2011): 585–603. Wherever we look in medieval and early modern Europe, considering virtually all time periods, we come across hospitals; first in monasteries, then in special houses run by the monastic Orders, and finally in cities and other locations, maintained by secular authorities.

far enough away from the town center of Marburg, and yet close enough to secure basic supplies and to provide the necessary basic medical treatment.⁴⁷

Not surprisingly, Elisabeth enjoyed tremendous popularity as a saint, as Dietrich von Apolda's hagiography confirms, which has survived in eleven manuscripts and was translated into German numerous times, as the twenty-three manuscripts confirm.⁴⁸ A printed version appeared in Erfurt in 1520, published by Matthes Maler.⁴⁹ She enjoyed her fame particularly because she as a high-ranking noblewoman dedicated her life to the sick and the poor, and tried to offer them basic health care. All this, however, does not allow us to draw reliable information from these hagiographical accounts regarding hygiene and medicine at the upper levels of society.

Already in the early Middle Ages the hospital of the monastery of St. Gall in northern Switzerland was famous, and we could easily rattle off a long list of other significant health-care centers throughout medieval Europe without gaining a significantly different perspective.⁵⁰ Of course, hospitals were not what

⁴⁷ Dieter Jetter, *Grundzüge der Hospitalgeschichte*. Grundzüge, 22 (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1973); S. Reicke, *Das deutsche Spital und sein Recht im Mittelalter*. 2 vols. Kirchenrechtliche Abhandlungen, 111 and 114. Rpt. (1932; Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1967); Gerard A. Lee, *Leper Hospitals in Medieval Ireland, with a Short Account of the Military and Hospitaller Order of St Lazarus of Jerusalem* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1996); James William Brodman, *Charity and Welfare: Hospitals and the Poor in Medieval Catalonia* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998); Peregrine Horden, "Family History and Hospital History in the Middle Ages," *Living in the City*, ed. Eugenio Sonnino. Collana convegni, 4 (Rome: Casa editrice Università degli studi di Roma La Sapienza, 2004), 255–82; *Europäisches Spitalwesen: Institutionelle Fürsorge in Mittelalter und Früher Neuzeit: Hospitals and Institutional Care in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, ed. Martin Scheutz, Andrea Sommerlechner, Herwig Weigl, and Alfred Stefan Weiss (Cologne and Vienna: Böhlau, 2008). See also the contribution to this volume by Erin Lynch who focuses on the treatment of lepers and their psychological problems of lacking haptic contacts with ordinary people. There are still many such architectural designs for lepers to be found in England, such as in St. James' in Great Ormside, Cumbria; St. Bees Priory, St. Bees, Cumbria (now infilled); St. Mary's Church, Easington, County Durham; St. Nicholas' Church, Berden; St. Nicholas Church, Westgate Street Gloucester, Gloucestershire; etc. For other hagioscopes in medieval Europe, see <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hagioscope> (last accessed on July 7, 2016). There is also a remarkable example in St. Mary's Cathedral in Limerick, Ireland, today difficult to find behind the organ.

⁴⁸ <http://www.handschriftencensus.de/werke#D> (last accessed on Feb. 12, 2016).

⁴⁹ *Das Leben der heiligen Elisabeth von Thüringen* (see note 38); see also Margret Lemberg, *Die Marburger Fragmente der mittelhochdeutschen Verslegende vom Leben der heiligen Elisabeth*. Marburger Drucke, 6 (Marburg: Hitzenroth, 1991).

⁵⁰ Walter Horn and Ernest Born, *The Plan of St. Gall: A Study of the Architecture & Economy of & Life in a Paradigmatic Carolingian Monastery*, with a foreword by Wolfgang Braunfels; a translation into English by Charles W. Jones of the directives of Adalhard, 753–826, the ninth abbot of

we mean today with that term when they emerged first in the fourth century C.E.; instead they were mostly hostels for the poor and travelers, for people in need, and those who ran hospitals assumed that responsibility out of a strong Christian sense to be kind to one's fellow men, that is, compassion. Hence, quite naturally, throughout the Middle Ages and early modern age hospitals differed from each other greatly, depending on the institution and organization that supported them. Hospitals in monasteries were mostly, or even exclusively, only open to the member of their community, while leprosariums served to house lepers. Since the ninth century, hospitals increasingly welcomed primarily old and poor people, women, and orphans, but that was to change again in the course of time, especially when new diseases and epidemics appeared.

The Hospital Brothers of St. Anthony, Order of St. Anthony or Canons Regular of St. Anthony of Vienne (Canonici Regulares Sancti Antonii, or CRSAnt) formed a monastic congregation in 1095 by Gaston of Valloire, a nobleman of the Dauphiné, and his son. It was confirmed by Pope Urban II in the same year, in gratitude for the son's miraculous cure from St. Anthony's fire presumably thanks to the relics of Saint Anthony the Great; hence their specific goal consisted of helping sick people who suffered from the so-called St. Anthony's Fire, a very common phenomenon especially among the poor who could not afford to eat better bread not infected by the toxin. Due to the community's successes further hospitals were opened in Gap, Chambéry, and Besançon, and later many others appeared all over Spain, Italy, Flanders, and Germany, where one of their first monasteries and hospitals was opened in 1214 in the far south, in Memmingen. The Hospitallers took care also of the victims of the Black Death, and by the end of the fifteenth century owned ca. 370 hospitals all over Europe. However, since the sixteenth century, with the rise of the Protestant Reformation and, especially, the development of more advanced medical treatments (Paracelsus), the Order declined – also for many other reasons, to be sure – and received its death knell by the French Revolution. Their most famous hospital was located in Isenheim

Corbie; and with a note by A. Hunter Dupree on the significance of The Plan of St. Gall to the history of measurement. 3 vols. California Studies in the History of Art, 19 (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1979); Peter Ochsenbein, *Das Kloster St. Gallen im Mittelalter: die kulturelle Blüte vom 8. bis zum 12. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart: Theiss, 1999); Johannes Duft, "Die Apotheke und der Heilkräutergarten im Hospital des karolingischen Klosterplanes zu St. Gallen," *Apotheken und Apotheker im Bodenseeraum: Festschrift für Ulrich Leiner*, ed. Ernst Ziegler (Sigmaringen: Thorbecke, 1988), 13–24; Andrea zur Nieden, *Der Alltag der Mönche: Studien zum Klosterplan von St. Gallen* (Hamburg: Diplomica-Verlag, 2008).

near Colmar, today known so well because of the glorious altar piece by Niclaus of Haguenau and Matthias Grünewald (1512–1516).⁵¹

In her contribution to this volume, Chiara Benati discusses the medical commonplace book (*Arzneibuch*) by one of the most respected physicians working in the nearby Straßburg hospital run by the same Order, Hans von Gersdorff.⁵² As today, of course, the relationship between physicians and hospitals has always been of great significance, neither side being able to exist without the other. We are dealing here, undoubtedly, with the mental dimension of human existence, since the physical well-being depends just as much on spiritual happiness as on physical happiness.⁵³

Briefly turning to the east and other religious cultures, the first Islamic hospital was erected in Bagdad on behalf of al-Mansur in 766, particularly open to the poor. But in the following centuries such *Bimaristans* were opened in all major cities in the Islamic empire. The focus normally rested on treating eye illnesses and mental sickness.⁵⁴ Jewish health centers, such as those established in Jerusalem and Palermo in ca. 600, in Regensburg ca. 1210, Cologne 1248, Vienna ca. 1379, cannot be easily compared to Christian or Islamic hospitals because they

⁵¹ Generally, see Kay P. Jankrift, *Krankheit und Heilkunde im Mittelalter*, 2nd ed. (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2012); in particular, see Adalbert Mischlewski, “Der Antoniter-Orden in Deutschland,” *Archiv für mittelrheinische Kirchengeschichte* 10 (1958): 3–32; id., *Grundzüge der Geschichte des Antoniterordens bis zum Ausgang des 15. Jahrhunderts, unter besonderer Berücksichtigung von Leben und Wirken des Petrus Mitte de Caprariis.* Bonner Beiträge zur Kirchengeschichte, 8 (Cologne and Vienna: Böhlau, 1976); https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hospital_Brothers_of_St._Anthony (last accessed on June 9, 2016).

⁵² Cf. Annette von Gersdorff, “Medizin und erwachende Neuzeit: der Wundarzt Hans von Gersdorff; ca. 1450 bis 1529,” Ph.D. diss. Munich 1976. See now also Philippe Hemigou, “Medieval Orthopaedic History in Germany: Hieronymus Brunschwig and Hans von Gersdorff,” *International Orthopaedics* 39.10 (2015): 2081–86.

⁵³ I have discussed this already in a larger context; see the my Introduction to *Mental Health, Spirituality, and Religion in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Age*, ed. Albrecht Classen. Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture, 15 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2014).

⁵⁴ Dieter Jetter, “Zur Architektur islamischer Krankenhäuser,” *Sudhoffs Archiv für Geschichte der Medizin und der Naturwissenschaften* 45.3 (1961): 261–73; Arsian Terzioğlu, “Mittelalterliche islamische Krankenhäuser unter Berücksichtigung der Frage nach den ältesten psychiatrischen Anstalten,” Ph. D. diss. Berlin 1968; Linda Northrup, *Al-Bīmārīstān al-Manṣūrī Explorations: The Interface Between Medicine, Politics and Culture in Early Mamluk Egypt.* ASK Working Paper, 12 (Bonn: Annemarie Schimmel Kolleg – History and Society During the Mamluk Era (1250–1517), 2013); for a recent survey, see Ahmed Ragab, *The Medieval Islamic Hospital. Medicine, Religion, and Charity* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

operated on different religious and medical premises. Parallel to hospitals, we can find many Jewish baths, or mikvehs, in medieval cities.⁵⁵

As we can read in the *Encyclopaedia Judaica*:

The public bath and adjoining *mikveh* were maintained by Jewish communities throughout the Middle Ages as part of the institutions of Jewish social life and welfare. Hygienic habits and the ritual requirements of the Jewish religion made the Jews regard bathing as part of their living routine during a period when bathing was generally considered a form of rare luxury in Europe.⁵⁶

In the course of time, medieval hospitals received more of a monastic rule, better financial support, and an increased medical staffing, much of which was regulated during the council of Vienne in 1311. In 1120 Raymon de Puy founded a major hospital in Jerusalem and under the order of St. John. It was transferred to Cyprus in 1291 after the loss of Jerusalem, and to Rhodes in 1309.⁵⁷ The later Middle Ages witnessed the growth of hospitals in many parts of Europe, especially in the cities, such as in Barcelona in 1401, and in many parts of northern Italy since the first half of the fifteenth century (*Ospedali Maggiori*). Many late

55 For broad historical perspectives, see the contributions to *Zur Geschichte der jüdischen Krankenhäuser in Europa: Vorträge auf dem Symposium der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Krankenhausgeschichte am 13. Februar 1970 in Heidelberg*. Historia hospitalium, Sonderheft (Düsseldorf: Triltsch, 1970).

56 "Bath, Bathing: Middle Ages and Modern Times," *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 2nd edition, vol. 3 (Detroit, New York, et al.: Thomson Gale, 2007), 210–11 (https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/judaica/ejud_0002_0003_0_02167.html; last accessed on June 9, 2016). A great example of a mikveh, which was re-discovered only recently by archaeologists, can be found in Erfurt, Germany, which is located near the Krämerbrücke and the Old Synagogue. Cf. E. Altwasser, Gerhard Schade, and Karin Sczech, *Alte Synagoge und Mikwe zu Erfurt* (Jena and Quedlinburg: Busser & Stadeler, 2009). See also Stefanie Hoss, *Baths and Bathing: The Culture of Bathing and the Baths and Thermae in Palestine from the Hasmoneans to the Moslem Conquest, with an appendix on Jewish rituals baths (mikva'ot)*. BAR International Series, 1346 (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2005). See also David Kotlar and Judith Baskin, "Mikveh," *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 2nd edition, vol. 14, 225–27.

57 See the contributions to *Der Johanniter-Orden, der Malteser-Orden, der ritterliche Orden des hl. Johannes vom Spital zu Jerusalem: seine Aufgaben, seine Geschichte*, ed. Adam Wienand (Cologne: Wienand Verlag, 1977); Jürgen Sarnowsky, *Die Johanniter: ein geistlicher Ritterorden in Mittelalter und Neuzeit* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 2011); Thomas Frelle, *Die Johanniter, vom Kreuzritter zum Samariter: die Geschichte des Malteserordens* (Gernsbach: Casimir Katz Verlag, 2012); for an excellent English study, see Jonathan Simon Christopher Riley-Smith, *Hospitallers: The History of the Order of St. John* (London: Hamledon Press, 1999); see also the contributions to *The Military Orders: History and Heritage*, ed. Victor Mallia-Milanes (Aldershot, Hampshire, and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2008).

medieval hospitals were housed in rather impressive buildings with numerous relics and works of art, such as in Bruges, Beaune, Tonnerre, Angers, Lübeck, Winchester, and Isenheim.⁵⁸ Many other hospitals can be identified in cities all over medieval and early modern Europe, such as in Bruges (Belgium) or Kilkenny (Ireland), even though the architectural remains often are rather sparse.

After all, and that is all we need to observe here, sickness, illness, and the respective medical treatment were as fundamental for all human history throughout the entire pre-modern world as were very different aspects such as love, marriage, sexuality, and death. The difference between Jewish, Islamic, and Christian hospitals or medical treatment might have been in degrees, that is, in some different methods and approaches to dealing with the sick, but in essence every society throughout time had to find pragmatic solutions in handling its sick and dying members.⁵⁹

The overarching influence of Islamic medicine, which in turn heavily drew from classical knowledge through a flood of Arabic translations, on Jewish and Christian medicine cannot be overlooked. Jewish doctors quickly gained the greatest reputation for their practical experience and high level of expertise, appealing thereby also to their Muslim and Christian neighbors. As John M. Efron alerts us, there was a proportionately larger number of physicians among the Jewish population than in any other group. They led a fairly peripatetic lifestyle, freely sharing their information with colleagues far and wide:

As a consequence, Jewish doctors enjoyed public recognition both within the narrow confines of Jewish society and far beyond its limits. As is well known, Jewish physicians all over Europe were called upon to be court physicians in the service of kings, princes, and members of the aristocracy. Christian clergy also made use of Jewish doctors, to the extent that the majority of late medieval and Renaissance Popes had Jewish physicians in their service.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ U. Lindgren, “Hospital,” *Lexikon des Mittelalters*, vol. V (Munich and Zurich: Artemis Verlag, 1991), 133–37; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Isenheim_Altaarpiece (last accessed on June 9, 2016). See also the contributions to *Europäisches Spitalwesen – institutionelle Fürsorge in Mittelalter und Früher Neuzeit*, ed. Martin Scheutz. Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung, Ergänzungsband, 51 (Vienna and Munich: Oldenbourg, 2008); see also Heinz Grotfeld, *Das Bad im arabisch-islamischen Mittelalter: eine kulturgeschichtliche Studie* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1970).

⁵⁹ See, for instance, Peter E. Pormann and Emile Savage-Smith, *Medieval Islamic Medicine*. New Edinburgh Islamic Surveys (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007); Ahmed Ragab, *The Medieval Islamic Hospital: Medicine, Religion, and Charity* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015). It is not clear whether Jews ever had hospitals of their own within medieval Europe, but we can be certain that they entertained their own practice in that regard.

⁶⁰ John M. Efron, *Medicine and the German Jews: A History* (New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 2001), 17. He draws, for instance, from Isak Münz, *Die jüdischen Ärzte im Mit-*

We also must not ignore the considerable number of Jewish women working as medical professionals.⁶¹

Medieval Medicine – an Old and Ever New Research Topic

Hygiene, healthcare, and medicine are intimately tied together, and this also from a historical perspective. Of course, the early Middle Ages knew probably much less how to cope with sickness, infections, epidemics, and other health problems than people in later centuries, which commonly led to a very high mortality rate especially among infants and young mothers.⁶² But in the course of time – and this well before 1500, as we have already observed with regard to Saint Elisabeth – medieval society witnessed the growing establishments of hospitals, the rise of medical care generally, the constant professionalization of medical education, and hence also the increasing health of the entire population. This is documented through many different text genres and archeological investigations. The high Middle Ages witnessed the growth of herbal treatises, of medicinal recipe books, the considerable increase in the number of medical professionals, and also the foundation of hospitals, especially outside of monasteries.⁶³

Medieval medicine derived much of its knowledge either from the classical-ancient tradition or from oral folkloric sources, or magic; however, since the twelfth century the influence of the Hippocratic-Galenic tradition, transmitted to

telalter: Ein Beitrag zur Kulturgeschichte des Mittelalters (Frankfurt a. M.: J. Kauffmann, 1922); see also Joseph Shatzmiller, “On Becoming a Jewish Doctor in the High Middle Ages,” *Sefarad* 43.2 (1983): 239–50; id., “Doctors and Medical Practice in Germany Around the Year 1200: The Evidence of Sefer Hasidim,” *Journal of Jewish Studies* 33.1–2 (1982): 583–93. See now also the almost encyclopedic study by Johann Christoph Bürgel, *Ärztliches Leben und Denken im arabischen Mittelalter*, ed. Fabian Käs. Islamic History and Civilization, 135 (Leiden: Brill, 2016).

61 *Die Frau im Judentum – Jüdische Frauen in der Medizin*, ed. Caris-Petra Heidel. Medizin und Judentum, 2 (Frankfurt a. M.: Mabuse-Verlag, 2014).

62 Horst Wolfgang Böhme, “Krankheit, Heilung und früher Tod zu Beginn des Mittelalters,” *Ge-sund und krank im Mittelalter: Marburger Beiträge zur Kulturgeschichte der Medizin. 3. Tagung der Arbeitsgruppe “Marburger Mittelalter-Zentrum (MMZ)” Marburg, 25. und 26. März 2005*, ed. Andreas Meyer and Jürgen Schulz-Grobert (Leipzig: Eudora-Verlag, 2007), 211–26.

63 See now the overview by Karl-Heinz Leven, *Geschichte der Medizin: von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart*. Beck’sche Reihe, 2452 (Munich: Beck, 2008); Walter Bruchhausen, Heinz Schott, and Ralf Forsbach, *Geschichte, Theorie und Ethik der Medizin*. Uni-Taschenbücher, 2915 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2008).

Europe through Arabic translations, which were then translated into Hebrew, and ultimately into Latin at centers such as Toledo and Salerno, deeply transformed all of pre-modern medicine.⁶⁴ The humoral theory, relying on the concept of the four humors in the human body, enjoyed the greatest respect wide into the early modern time.⁶⁵

Cultural-Historical Approaches to Healthcare

The purpose here cannot be to write once again a history of medieval and early modern history, which has already been done numerous times by much better experts in this field, even though Alain Touwaide correctly warns us that the entire field continues to suffer from many shortcomings. “Manuscripts are still largely uncatalogued ... texts have not been identified well enough and their content has not been properly studied. Consequently, many works are still unknown and *a fortiori* unpublished in the form of scholarly printed editions.”⁶⁶ Currently, however, we observe a rapprochement between archaeology, forensic science, history of medicine, and philology (working with medical tracts in manuscript form), all of them collaborating to enhance our understanding of the medical conditions in the pre-modern world.

The present volume intends to contribute to this research field, with a focus more on literary-historical documents, though the medical history well into the early modern age and the topics of spas, hygiene, bathing, and hence per-

64 This topic has been discussed already for a very long time, and the relevant research literature is legion; for a good synopsis, see Bernhard Dietrich Haage and Wolfgang Wegner, together with Gundolf Keil and Helga Haage-Naber, *Deutsche Fachliteratur der Artes in Mittelalter und Früher Neuzeit. Grundlagen der Germanistik*, 43 (Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag, 2007), 177–256; see now the contribution to this volume by Thomas G. Benedek. Cf. also Elisabeth Sulzer, *Darmgesundheit im Mittelalter: Analyse ausgewählter deutschsprachiger Kochrezepte aus dem Münchener Arzneibuch Cgm 415 vor dem Hintergrund der Humoralmedizin und Versuch einer kritischen Bewertung im Lichte moderner pharmakologischer Erkenntnisse. Mediävistik zwischen Forschung, Lehre und Öffentlichkeit*, 11 (Frankfurt a. M.: Peter Lang, 2016). Her study proves to be particularly valuable because she approaches those medieval medical recipes from the point of view of modern-day pharmacology, which is her secondary field of study.

65 Harald Derschka, *Die Viersäftelehre als Persönlichkeitstheorie: zur Weiterentwicklung eines antiken Konzepts im 12. Jahrhundert* (Ostfildern: Thorbecke, 2013). Many of the contributors to our volume address this topic as well.

66 Alain Touwaide, “Medicine,” *Handbook of Medieval Culture: Fundamental Aspects and Conditions of the European Middle Ages*, ed. Albrecht Classen. Vol. 2 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2015), 954–98; here 954.

sonal cleanliness are not excluded either. While medieval architecture reveals few details about the actually present bath culture, which became much better known only in the subsequent centuries, this should not mislead us to assume that people did not take baths or did not have available a variety of water sources, cold and hot, for their personal hygienic needs.⁶⁷ After all, mineral and thermal baths and spas were quite popular already in the late Middle Ages.⁶⁸ While above I reflected on actual healthcare in a hospital or through the care of a physician, here I am looking more at prophylactic approaches pursued by people in the pre-modern era.

We know of countless travelers who underwent extensive efforts and spent large amounts of money to frequent spas for medical and for entertainment purposes, and this since the late fourteenth century.⁶⁹ Urban public baths had already turned into centers of communal entertainment, get-togethers, and health-care, but spas gained tremendous attraction especially since the late fifteenth century. The statutes of the Zürich Grossmünster canon house granted the canons since 1376 a lengthy tour to a spa, probably to the near-by Baden, of up to eight days once in spring and once in fall. The same is recorded for the canons of the Mainz Cathedral after 1467, who were granted health-specific 'vacations' at spas for a duration of up to six weeks. Similarly, the Nuremberg city council gave its high-ranking urban administrator the privilege of taking time off to visit a spa. Major spas existed in Wiesbaden (since 1232), near the castle of the house of Nassau (since 1448), then in Aachen (at the latest since 1267), and in Bad Ems (since 1382).⁷⁰

67 See the contributions to *Badekultur in der Renaissance: Funktionsweise, Bauprogramm und Vorbilder der Badeanlage des Château de Maunes, Burgund. Katalog zur Ausstellung im Rahmen des Forschungsprojektes 'Thermische Behaglichkeit in Badeanlagen der Renaissance'*, ed. Susanne Traber and Claudia Nagel (Aachen: Fachhochschule, Fachbereich Architektur, 2005).

68 Frank Fürbeth, *Heilquellen in der deutschen Wissensliteratur des Spätmittelalters: zur Genese und Funktion eines Paradigmas der Wissensvermittlung am Beispiel des 'Tractatus de balneis naturabilis'* von Felix Hemmerli und seiner Rezeption; mit einer Edition des Textes und seiner fru-neuhochdeutschen Übersetzung. Wissensliteratur im Mittelalter, 42 (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2004).

69 *Badeorte und Bäderreisen in Antike, Mittelalter und Neuzeit*, ed. Michael Matheus. Mainzer Vorträge, 5 (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2001).

70 Birgit Studt, "Die Badenfahrt: Ein neues Muster der Badepraxis und Badegesellschaft im deutschen Spätmittelalter," *Badeorte und Bäderreisen* (see note 69), 33–52; see also Frank Fürbeth, "Zur Bedeutung des Bäderwesens im Mittelalter und in der frühen Neuzeit," *Paracelsus und Salzburg*, ed Heinz Dopsch and Peter F. Kramml. Mitteilungen der Gesellschaft für Salzburger Landeskunde, Ergänzungs-Band, 14 (Salzburg: Gesellschaft für Salzburger Landeskunde, 1994), 463–97. See also the contributions to this volume by David Tomíček and by Thomas G. Benedek.

Medicine and Literature in the Middle Ages

Little wonder that poets and writers throughout the late Middle Ages enjoyed referring to such spas, and then also to hospitals and physicians, commonly with a sense of irony and mockery, which nevertheless confirmed the ubiquitous presence of such institutions and the practice of such medical experts throughout Europe, not to mention the Islamic world, where probably much better and higher standards were the norm.

Satire of the professional field of medical doctors seems to have been a current topic throughout time, and this also in the pre-modern world, especially in the wake of the disastrous Black Death (ca. 1347–ca. 1351 and many times thereafter). Laughter about some situations or objects, however, is not a good indicator for the absence of a phenomenon; on the contrary, comedy actually reveals more common conditions or situations; otherwise the audiences would not have enjoyed the fun.

The famous early Renaissance thinker, poet, and philosopher Petrarch (1304–1374) tended to criticize and satirize the entire field of physicians, particularly in his *Invective contra medicum* (1352–1353; *Invectives Against a Doctor*), but he also enjoyed good friendships with medical experts such as Tommaso Del Garbo (1305–1370).⁷¹ His approach was tongue-in-cheek, and as serious as his arguments are supposed to sound, as humorous they were really to be perceived, at least with respect to the true nature of medicine. In other words, the debate between Petrarch and one of the medical doctors attending the ill Pope Clement VI pertained not so much to the true value of medicine, but to the ranking of the various humanist disciplines, since for Petrarch rhetoric would have to be appreciated much higher than medicine:

If in fact, like the rational soul, unless it has lost reason, commands its own body, and the body serves the soul, so all the arts invented for the soul command those invented for

⁷¹ Klaus Berdolt, *Arzt, Krankheit und Therapie bei Petrarca: die Kritik an Medizin und Naturwissenschaft im italienischen Frühhumanismus*. Acta humaniora (Weinheim: VCH, 1992); Katherine Park, *Doctors and Medicine in Early Renaissance Florence* (1985; Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014). See also Thomas Hay, *Epochen der Satire: Traditionslinien einer literarischen Gattung in Antike, Mittelalter und Renaissance*. Spolia Berolinensis, 28 (Hildesheim: Weidmann, 2008); Nancy S. Struever, “Petrarch’s *Invective contra medicum*: An Early Confrontation of Rhetoric and Medicine,” *Modern Language Notes* 108.4 (1983): 659–79; George A. Trone, “You lie like a doctor!” Petrarch’s Attack on Medicine,” *Yale Journal of Biology and Medicine* 70.2 (1997): 183–90.

the body; the arts of the body serve those of the soul. It is known that the liberal arts were invented for the soul, as the mechanical arts were for the body.⁷²

Nevertheless, as we can recognize here as well, the fourteenth century already knew of a strong medical profession, whether or not its representatives were truly effective in their dealings with the sick. Petrarch basically used that group of experts as a foil for his own philosophical reflections on rhetoric and the liberal arts.

The Medical Doctor in the Work of Der Stricker

While I have discussed mostly the practical aspects of health-care, medicine, hygiene, bath culture, and related topics, from here on I turn especially to literary examples where the same subject matters are discussed or mentioned in passing, shedding significant light on the public discourse on those issues. This is, then, so to speak, the complementary discourse to the medical or hygienic one. There are earlier examples as well where a literary character is poking fun at professional medicine, such as the famous priest and rogue, Amîs, a figure created by the Middle High German poet Der Stricker (fl. ca. 1220–1250) (perhaps: The Knitter) who became the founding stock character of medieval and early modern German satirical literature.⁷³ Although serving as a village priest, Amîs is both free and intelligent enough to operate far beyond his parochial limits, and actually roams through the world and makes fun of and ridicules those individuals who are guilty of arrogance, hubris, pride, and other vices. At one point, Amîs

72 Petrarch, “Invective contra medicum,” *Opere Latine di Francesco Petrarca*, vol. 2, ed. Antonietta Bufona (Turin: Unione Tipografico-Ed. Torinese, 1987).

73 For a brief introduction, see Michael Resler, “Der Stricker,” *German Writers and Works of the High Middle Ages: 1170–1280*, ed. James Harin and Will Hasty. Dictionary of Literary Biography, 138 (Detroit, Washington, DC, and London: Gale Research, 1984), 117–32. See also Stephen L. Wailes, *Studien zur Kleindichtung des Strickers*. Philologische Studien und Quellen, 104 (Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 1981); Rupert Kalkofen, *Der Priesterbetrug als Weltklugheit: Eine philologisch-hermeneutische Interpretation des “Pfaffen Amis”*. Epistemata, IL (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 1989); Albrecht Classen, “Love and Marriage and the Battle of Genders in the Stricker’s *maeren*,” *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* XCII.1 (1991): 105–22; Hedda Ragotzky, “Die ‘Klugheit der Praxis’ und ihr Nutzen: zum Verhältnis von erzählter Geschichte und lehrhafter Fazitbildung in Mären des Strickers,” *Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Literatur* 123.1 (2001): 49–64; Klaus Grubmüller, *Die Ordnung, der Witz und das Chaos: Eine Geschichte der europäischen Novellistik im Mittelalter: Fabliau – Märe – Novelle* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 2006), 79–101.

arrives at the court of the Duke of Lorraine to whom he introduces himself as the best possible medical doctor (“*arzat*,” 813).⁷⁴ Amîs does not address the duke by accident, as we learn immediately, since the latter admits that his hospital is filled with too many sick people whom he cannot get healed. The duke promises him much money if he helps him remedy this situation (822), but Amîs insists that he should wait with the payment or reward until he would have heard from the mouth of the sick himself that they had been completely recovered: “*daz si jehent daz si gesunt sin*” (835; that they say that they are healthy).

Twenty of the sick people are brought to court, and Amîs takes them to a private chamber to examine them. But in reality he only tells them to decide amongst themselves who would be the sickest of them all. He would then take that person, kill him/her and use the blood to heal them all, certainly a horrible scenario, which frightens everyone, so that even those who suffer the most quickly decide to claim that they are actually well: “*unde begunden alle jehen, / in waere genade geschehen, / si wäeren alle wol gesunt*” (883–85; and they all began to say that they had been graced, they all were quite healthy). Amîs challenges them, however, not willing to believe them, but since they are so afraid of being victimized, they even swear that they have no ailment or illness any longer. This is exactly what the rogue had tried to achieve, so he sends them all to the duke to confirm in his presence that they feel well again. Amîs receives a large payment and quickly departs, sending all the money home to his friends in England. As to be expected, a week later all the sick people return, worse off than ever before, and admit how the priest, who was in reality no medical doctor, had badly manipulated them. Yet, by that time it is all too late and the rogue has disappeared, though his fame and notoriety grow far and wide (931–32).

The Medical Doctor in the Narratives of *Till Eulenspiegel*

This motif of the deceptive medical doctor, who only pretends to know something about healthcare and brags to be the best doctor in the entire world, found numer-

⁷⁴ Des Strickers *Pfaffe Amis*, ed. K. Kamihara. Göppinger Arbeiten zur Germanistik, 233 (Göppingen: Kümmerle, 1978). See now Elizabeth Andersen, “Die Norm des Komischen im ‘Pfaffen Amis’,” *Text und Normativität im deutschen Mittelalter: XX. Anglo-German Colloquium*, ed. Elke Brüggen, Franz-Josef Holznagel, Sebastian Coxon, Almut Suerbaum, and Reinhold Katers (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2012), 321–32.

ous imitations; none better than by the anonymous poet of *Till Eulenspiegel* (ca. 1510, perhaps by Hermann Bote from Brunswick).⁷⁵ Because of the great importance and huge impact of *Till Eulenspiegel*, which is not reflected by any of the contributions here, I offer a more extensive discussion of Bote's work.

This collection of prose tales, or *histori*, has represented one of the greatest challenges for literary historians, being characterized by many different aspects of comedy, including satire, sarcasm, scatology, linguistic humor, social criticism, and so forth. Little wonder that scholarship has continuously responded to these tales because they reflect not just laughter and fun, but also, which seems to be the most characteristic of literary humor, profound epistemological reflections.⁷⁶

In the fifty-seventh tale, Eulenspiegel arrives in Nuremberg, where he posts big broadsheets, advertising himself as a most famous physician, capable of helping all people, irrespective of their illness. Throughout time, and until today, people desperate because they cannot get well, have irrationally relied on such fantasy promises by a miracle healer. Indeed, here the hospital itself is filled with many sick individuals, who do not receive the required help, or whom the medical experts cannot help as desired. Irrespective of their medical misery, the head administrator of the hospital would like to get rid of the inhabitants because they do not recover and simply cost money. So this seems to be something like an Anthonite hospital for the poor and the sick, financed by the Order.

Eulenspiegel does not approach the head officer; instead his advertisement attracts the latter's attention because he foolishly hopes that the stranger, with his outlandish promises of miraculous healing powers, might be able to help him. The protagonist pursues the particular strategy of seducing the authorities to believe him because of his outlandish claims that he could heal even the worst case (53). Of course, just as in the case of Der Stricker, Eulenspiegel has no

⁷⁵ Ein kurzweilig Lesen von *Dil Ulenspiegel*, ed. Wolfgang Lindow (Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam jun., 1966); regarding Herman Bote's authorship of these tales, which continues to be rather debatable, see Herbert Blume, "Hermann Bote – Autor des *Eulenspiegelbuches*? Zum Stand der Forschung," *id.*, *Hermann Bote: Braunschweiger Stadtschreiber und Literat: Studien zu seinem Leben und Werk*. Braunschweiger Beiträge zur deutschen Sprache und Literatur, 15 (Bielefeld: Verlag für Regionalgeschichte, 2009), 211–35 (orig. 1994).

⁷⁶ Albrecht Classen, "Der vertrackte, widerspenstige Held Till Eulenspiegel. Sexualität, der Körper, Transgression," *Euphorion* 92.2 (1998): 249–70; *id.*, "Transgression and Laughter, the Scatological and the Epistemological: New Insights into the Pranks of Till Eulenspiegel," *Medievalia et Humanistica* 33 (2007): 41–61; *id.* "Laughter as the Ultimate Epistemological Vehicle in the Hands of Till Eulenspiegel," *Neophilologus* 92 (2008): 417–89. See also the contributions to *Laughter in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times: Epistemology of a Fundamental Human Behavior, Its Meaning, and Consequences*, ed. Albrecht Classen. Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture, 5 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2010).

medical knowledge and only pretends to be the miracle doctor, however, insofar as he threatens all the sick patients by saying that he would burn to powder the one whom he would deem the weakest, no one dares to question his authority.

Greed and medical desperation go hand in hand; there are many cases of sickness that cannot be healed, and hence the hospital is overcrowded with individuals who have already spent a long time there, wasting away the available budget. Very similar to the account in Der Stricker's story, the issue is not a medical one, offering an answer to the many hopeless cases of sick and dying people living in the hospital. Instead, the owner of the hospital proves to be a gullible person willing to try anything in his power to reduce the number of patients in his hospital, whether this is realistic or not. Just as today, we might say, sickness thus proves to be a matter of financial profit, either for the owner of the hospital or for the physician, all depending on their relationship and on the doctor's medical skills.

Insofar as all the sick people in the hospital promise Eulenspiegel to trust him and to do exactly as he orders them to do, we realize that the account itself reflects profoundly on issues of authenticity, trustworthiness, medical sciences, reliance, and honesty. Just as in the case of Der Stricker's account, Eulenspiegel informs each sick person that he could only help her or him if he were to burn the worst-off person to death and to make each sick inhabitant imbibe part of the ash of the burnt individual. Fundamental fear of death thus emerges as Eulenspiegel's basis for his devious strategy to extract money for his false claim of being an expert medical doctor.⁷⁷

As both poets reflect, people were desperate and willing to try anything to get well again, despite all their own doubts and questions regarding the claims by those quack doctors. Of course, neither Pfaffe Amîs nor Till Eulenspiegel ever proves to be a really expert medical practitioner; instead they predicate all their efforts on people's gullibility and naïveté in trusting even ordinary individuals from the street that those could produce more of a medical miracle than the educated class of medical practitioners. Instead of proscribing practical and sympathetic medicine or health-related practices, both the Priest Amîs and Till Eulenspiegel rely on common fear of death and make each individual compete against

⁷⁷ I have discussed this issue at greater length in "Angst vor dem Tod: Jämmerliche Männerfiguren in der deutschen Literatur des Spätmittelalters (von *Mauritius von Craûn* zu Heinrich Kaufringer und *Till Eulenspiegel*)," "Sei wi du willt namenloses Jenseits": Neue interdisziplinäre Ansätze zur Analyse des Unerklärlichen, ed. Christa Tuczay. Beihefte zur Mediaevistik, 21 (Frankfurt a. M.: Peter Lang, 2016), 213–31.

each other with the simplistic goal of surviving in the struggle against epidemic sickness.

In a radical move against all expectations, Eulenspiegel resorts to a most brutal strategy, forcing each individual sick person to compete against all others, requiring everyone to get up from his/her bed and to depart from the hospital, whether s/he has been immobile for decades or not. The sheer fear of death makes them all vacate the hospital as fast as possible, although none of them is really healed or has recovered enough to move again. Eulenspiegel simply carries out his strategy on the basis of plain fear of death and thus knows how to move even the most immobile individual, since no one wants to be burnt to death for the well-being of the others.

The owner of the hospital has to learn quickly; for after three days everyone returns to the hospital as sick as before, if not even worse, because they had been chased out of the hospital only out of fear that they could be burnt to death. Undoubtedly, Eulenspiegel did not know how to bring about a miraculous healing, but he had been successful in his rhetorical manipulation for his own purposes because the patients and the owner of the hospital had been ignorant, naive, trusting, and foolish. Eulenspiegel did not know anything else or more than anyone else with respect to health care and medicine, but he understood very well how to manipulate people's basic fear and hope with regards to apparently incurable medical problems. Even though Eulenspiegel had promised a miracle healing for all, the outcome was a complete waste for the owner of the hospital, while the poor sick people had to realize that they had been the victims both of a terrible blackmail and a huge deception scheme: "Also bliben die Krancken wieder im Spital wie vor und was das Gelt verlorn" (54; So the sick people stayed in the hospital again and the money was lost).

There are countless critical approaches to the tales about Eulenspiegel, whether they are linguistic, social, communicative, political, or anthropological in nature. Scholarship has eagerly responded to the incredibly intriguing narratives associated with this outrageous protagonist, who appears to undermine and defy society in any possible situation. This also entails hygiene and medicine, such as when we learn of Eulenspiegel frequenting a public bath where he should endeavor to cleanse his body but where he, in reality, deposits his worst dirt, his feces (no. 69).

The narrator does not perceive any need to explain the existence of a bath house and presents it as a standard feature of urban society in the city of Hanover. For political or advertisement reasons the proprietor calls it a "Huß der Reinikeit" (200; House of Cleanliness). Eulenspiegel does not frequent this house because of his individual need to clean himself, but because he has heard about its popularity. Both Eulenspiegel and the owner engage in a very supportive discussion

of what cleanliness means and confirm to each other what such a bath house could and should achieve for the visitor, especially because it is especially a “Huß der Reinikeit” (201; house of cleanliness) and not simply a “Badstub” (201; bathroom).

Eulenspiegel fully agrees with the owner that this is a special institution where those who enter are dirty and those who leave are clean, which could be understood both in physical and metaphysical terms. But Eulenspiegel takes the concept literally and defecates right next to the bath tub, which immediately teaches the owner, as he admits, to differentiate more carefully between words and their actual meaning. When he tries to reprimand the protagonist that he should have used a toilet to vacate his feces, and that he should have understood that the primary purpose of his bath house is to clean the body by way of sweating, Eulenspiegel defies him and emphasizes that the body must be cleaned both on the outside and on the inside.

The two almost come to blows, and the owner then basically throws him out, forcing him to go to the living room to get dressed. Trying to scare him, however, he first locks him in. Nevertheless, Eulenspiegel, discovering that the dinner table consists of a folding board, defecates there once again and then closes the table. But he sarcastically warns the proprietor: “Lieber Meistir, in diser Stuben bin ich erst gantz gereinigt. Gedenckt mein zu gut, ee es Mitag würt. Ich scheid darvon” (202; Dear Master, I have become entirely cleaned only in this room. Think of me well before noon. I am off). He warns him thus not to confuse ingestion with digestion, or food with excrement, which indicates to us how much the satirical author actually reflected here also on fundamental anthropological issues.

Here we could return to a discussion of the meaning of dirt, as Mary Douglas has already endeavored (see above), but the critical component in the present context consists of the much more cultural-historical dimension indicated here. The narrative reflects in very specific terms that early modern cities had, as a standard feature, both bath houses and toilets. The proprietor is well-off with his business since people must pay an entrance fee and also for the use of the bath itself. He becomes as much the target of Eulenspiegel’s satire and deliberate transgression as many of the different craftsmen, priests, aristocrats, merchants, professors, and others mentioned in the other narratives. Moreover, the owner clearly expresses his disgust and anger that his customer so egregiously soils his bath room and so deliberately misunderstands the intended meaning of ‘cleaning,’ abusing the interior space next to the bath tub as a site for his defecating. But Eulenspiegel is neither interested in anal eroticism nor in being a social rebel, as previous scholarship has often argued. Instead, his horrible action, which simply stinks to heaven, as the proprietor formulates it himself, serves him as a strategy

to deconstruct the traditional assumptions about human language and standard norms of behavior.

In this sense, Douglas's theorizing about dirt as a factor that brings about disorder applies exceedingly well in this context.⁷⁸ But here it may suffice to note only that bodily cleanliness matters greatly for everyone involved in this tale, although Eulenspiegel goes too far for the owner of the bath house and cleans himself, even of his feces. Both the proprietor and the audience both then and today feel deep disgust about this, and yet Eulenspiegel consistently operates with his own human waste in order to provoke the other figures in the tale, and thus to make us laugh about his intelligence and wit.

Many other times Eulenspiegel functionalizes his feces and various bodily fluids to horrify and shame his contemporaries. This does not mean, however, that these tales reflect a lower level of cultural development compared to today vis-à-vis the human body, since everyone displays a high degree of irritation and disgust, rejecting vehemently the rogue's behavior. Moreover, we continue to laugh about his tricks and cunning, even though we are deeply challenged in our own sense of hygiene.⁷⁹

To be sure, the entire collection of tales is deeply determined by the curious, often spurious, interaction between medicine, food-intake, health-care, cleanliness, dirt, and the corresponding linguistic responses. Perhaps not by accident Eulenspiegel's life story begins with his triple baptism, as related in the first tale, where we learn that he was first baptized regularly in the church, but on the way home the god-mother, drunk from the festivities, fell off a bridge and soiled

⁷⁸ Albrecht Classen, *The German Volksbuch. A Critical History of a Late-Medieval Genre*. Studies in German Language and Literature, 15 (Lewiston, NY, Queenston, and Lampeter: Edwin Mellen Press, 1995, reissued 1999), 185–212; id., “Transgression and Laughter, the Scatological and the Epistemological: New Insights into the Pranks of Till Eulenspiegel,” *Medievalia et Humanistica* 33 (2007): 41–61; Alexander Schwarz, “Wer sagt das? Zum Kampf um die Sprechrolle im *Eulenspiegelbuch*,” *Eulenspiegel trifft Melusine: Der frühneuhochdeutsche Prosaroman im Licht neuer Forschungen und Methoden. Akten der Lausanner Tagung vom 2. bis 4. Oktober 2008*, ed. Catherine Drittenbass and André Schnyder. Chloe, 42 (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2010), 493–507; Hans-Joachim Behr, “Alles Scheiße – oder was? Vorkommen und Funktion von Exkrementen in literarischen Texten der Frühen Neuzeit,” *Nahrung, Notdurf und Obszönität in Mittelalter und Früher Neuzeit: Akten der Tagung Bamberg 2011*, ed. Andrea Grafetstätter (Bamberg: University of Bamberg Press, 2014), 11–32.

⁷⁹ Alison Williams, *Tricksters and Pranksters: Roguery in French and German Literature of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*. Internationale Forschungen zur Allgemeinen und Vergleichenden Literaturwissenschaft, 49 (Amsterdam and Atlanta, GA: Rodopi, 2000); see also the contributions to *Komische Gegenwelten: Lachen und Literatur in Mittelalter und Früher Neuzeit*, ed. Werner Röcke and Helga Neumann (Paderborn, Munich, et al.: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1999).

herself and the baby badly, which the narrator identifies as the second baptism. Consequently, Eulenspiegel has to be given a bath to clean him again: “Da war Eulenspiegel eins Tags dreimal geteufft, einmal im Tauff, einmal in der Lachen und eins im Kessel mit warmen Wasser” (11; That day Eulenspiegel was baptized three times; first in the baptism font, then in the ditch, and finally in the vessel with warm water).

Other Medical Doctors: Authority Figure or Object of Laughter? Geoffrey Chaucer

Significantly, the figure of the medical doctor emerged in other European literatures as well, most famously, perhaps in Geoffrey Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales* (ca. 1400), who portrayed here a learned individual who operates just as much in astrology as in practical medicine, relying heavily on Galenic humoral pathology and on natural magic:

He knew the cause of everich maladye,
Were it of hoot or coold or moyste or drye,
And where they engendred and of what humour.
He was a verray, parfit praticisour:
The cause yknowe and of his harm the roote,
Anon he yaf the sike man his boote.⁸⁰

Very skilled also in merchandising his medications, he is well prepared and ready to dispense his own powders and pills from his carry-on apothecary. The narrator introduces him as highly learned in bookish lore, drawing from the ancients:

Wel knew he the olde Esculapius
And Deyscorides and eek Rufus,
Olde Ypocras, Haly, and Galyen,
Serapion, Razis, and Avycent,
Averrois, Damascien, and Constantyn,
Bernard, and Gatesden, and Gilbertyn. (429–34).⁸¹

⁸⁰ Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales*. Sec. ed. by Robert Boenig and Andrew Taylor (Peterborough, ON, and Buffalo, NY: Broadview, 2012), 419–24.

⁸¹ As to be expected, there are numerous studies both on the Physician himself and then on his tale; see, for instance, Kirk L. Smith, “False Care and the Canterbury Cure: Chaucer Treats the New Galen,” *Literature and Medicine* 27.1 (2008): 61–81; Joshua J. Stigall, “His Studie Was But

Chaucer's satire and irony with regard to this physician does not need to be explored further; suffice it here to observe only that this famous poet included this figure as a common person who could not be missed in such a company of pilgrims, especially since the overarching purpose of his collection was to mirror his society at large and to entertain his audience with his witty, at times contemptuous remarks.

Chaucer's satire, typical and characteristic for this author, ought not to blind us to the relevance of the physician's appearance in the first place, especially because he apparently functions here as a caricature of his entire profession. There is no point in making fun of a profession at large if it were not wide-spread, well established, and probably functioning well, particularly at that late point in time, close to the end of the Middle Ages. And indeed, when we pay closer attention to other literary genres, we discover many different examples where physicians appear on the stage and make a big case of themselves, thereby being transformed into objects of ridicule.⁸² However, the very presence of literary satire directed against members of the medical profession in the pre-modern world signals that there must have been many, probably more or less well trained, and consulted by many people. Since they could not always guarantee healing, which is the same even today, those suffering from medical problems bitterly complained about the physicians and apothecaries and charged them with incompetence or hypocrisy. In fact, this all sounds surprisingly familiar to modern ears.

Les Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles

One final example to illustrate this case can be found in the famous French collection *Les Cents Nouvelles Nouvelles*, composed by an unknown author – here disregarding several potential individuals, such as Antoine de La Salle, Jean du Ponceau, or Philippe Pot – sometime between 1456 and 1467 and printed first in 1486.⁸³

Litel on the Bible': Materialism and Misreading in Chaucer's Physician's Tale," *Christian Scholar's Review* 42.3 (2013): 245–60; and for a quick treatment of the various authority figures mentioned here, see Boenig's and Taylor's commentary (see note 80), 54, note 10.

⁸² Albrecht Classen, "Die Figur des Arztes in den spätmittelalterlichen Fastnachtspielen," *Mittelalteinisches Jahrbuch* 47.3 (2012): 429–42.

⁸³ *Les cent nouvelles nouvelles*, ed. Roger Dubuis (Lyon: Presses Universitaires de Lyon, 1991; see also the reprint: Paris: Champion, 2005); Albrecht Classen, *Sex im Mittelalter: Die andere Seite einer idealisierten Vergangenheit. Literatur und Sexualität* (Badenweiler: Wissenschaftlicher Ver-

In the second novella, a young and attractive woman, daughter of a wealthy merchant, is wooed by many men, who would like to marry this fifteen-year old. But one day she contracts hemorrhoids, which endanger all the hopes and plans which her parents already had for this beauty. Everyone in the entire family is deeply grieved about this misfortune, and even elderly relatives cannot achieve any improvements despite a plethora of herbs and other folk medicine. Finally, all the doctors in town are brought in, one by one, and they all want to study the particular body part, to the young woman's great embarrassment.

She refuses for a long time, until her parents urge her hard enough, but all this is to no avail. She is placed on a bed, entirely covered, except at the specific spot where her hemorrhoids rest. The doctors try their best, they order all kinds of creams, powders, and medication, but nothing works because, as the narrator emphasizes, their learned books do not tell them anything about this ailment. In fact, it is getting worse every day, and her suffering increases, instead of getting better. Finally, the parents encounter an old Franciscan monk who has lost eyesight on one side, but appears to enjoy great authority because of his old age and a life filled with much travel. This old man, who soon proves to be nothing but a lustful predator, promises to cure the poor victim and arrives the next day with a powder and a tube through which he intends to blow the medicine into her orifice. Enjoying the opportunity, he closely studies and carefully touches her exposed behind.

The young woman, curious about his operation, turns her head and looks at him, seeing how he is applying the tube to her anus, lustfully staring with his one eye at her body. She finds the scene extremely hilarious and cannot suppress her laughter, which unfortunately erupts into a huge fart. That wind, however, hits the tube and blows the powder backwards right into the miserable man's only eye. Within a few days the acidic material destroys his pupil, leaving him blind, and he demands financial support for the rest of his life from the girl's father, who naturally rejects this, although he offers him a payment equivalent to the sum which he would have given him in case he had healed his daughter. This leads to a law case in London, which is apparently never fully decided, but everyone in the city enjoys hearing about it because of the grotesque case. This account thus ended up in the *Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles* because of its entertaining nature, whereas neither the young woman's medical problem nor the old Franciscan as a pretended physical doctor truly matter. We are informed that she finally gets well

lag Bachmann, 2011), 265–300. See now María Cristina Azuela Bernal, *Del Decamerón a las Cent Nouvelles nouvelles. Relaciones y transgresiones en la Nouvelle Medieval*. Cuadernos del Seminario de Poética, 24 (México: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2006).

again on her own, but she has lost her reputation since she is from then on no longer known because of her beauty, goodness, or elegance, but because of her involuntary breaking of wind which destroyed the Franciscan's eye-sight.⁸⁴

Even though the issue of hemorrhoids would not seem to be a major medical problem, not even in the fifteenth century, it causes much embarrassment, public gossip, and curiosity. Her physical privacy is entirely destroyed since every medical doctor, including the old Franciscan, is allowed to study her exposed rear closely, and yet no one can help her. Undoubtedly, the narrator predicated his story critically on the phallic symbolism of the tube and the Franciscan's lustfulness, which only results, however, in his becoming entirely blind. The girl heals on her own at the end, while the whole stream of doctors cannot help her at all. The author casts much satire on the entire professional group of medical experts, since everyone seems to be a quack and resorts to fake medicine, only topped by the monk who believes that he can utilize the situation for his own sexual lustfulness to penetrate her from behind, in proxy, at least.

But once again, this narrative does not inform us specifically about the lack of hygiene and medical care; on the contrary, we are specifically alerted to the presence of many physicians in town, even though none of them seems to be capable of solving the issue. Significantly, the parents subsequently resort to an alternative approach, hoping that a member of the Church like this old Franciscan monk could provide the long desired effective assistance. Ironically, of course, very similar to the Pfaffe Amîs and Till Eulenspiegel they all simply pretend to be truly learned and experts in the medical field.

The second story in the *Cent nouvelles nouvelles* proves to be so remarkable particularly in our context because it is the only one where the topic does not deal explicitly with love, sex, rape, marriage, and adultery. Instead, the focus rests on the young woman's derrière and how all the doctors and the Franciscan enjoy studying it carefully without achieving any success in healing her hemorrhoids. Her parents do not hesitate to spend much money on her medical treatment, though none of the doctors can actually help her. The narrator reflects

⁸⁴ There is not much relevant research literature on this marvelous collection; but see Nelly Labère, "Regarder par le trou de la lorgnette: 'L'Assez apparente vérité' des *Cent nouvelles nouvelles*," *Moyen Français* 57–58 (2005–2006): 203–26; Sarah Kay, "Ideology in 'Cent nouvelles nouvelles' 62: History, Historicism and Historicity," *Mittelalterliche Novellistik im europäischen Kontext: Kulturwissenschaftliche Perspektive*, ed. Mark Chinca, Timo Reuvekamp-Felber, and Christopher Young (Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 2006), 224–37; Alexandra Vélissariou, "L'Espace et le jeu des *Cent nouvelles nouvelles*," *Moyen Age: Revue d'Histoire et de Philologie* 114.2 (2008): 239–54; David P. LaGuardia, *Intertextual Masculinity in French Renaissance Literature: Rabelais, Brantôme, and the *Cent nouvelles nouvelles** (Aldershot, England; Ashgate, 2008).

thus the true extent to which health care was in great demand in late medieval cities and elsewhere, though he does not indicate any respect for this profession. However, the narrator's full interest here does not rest on the physicians' medical knowledge and expertise, but on their sexual interest in gazing at her exposed behind. The purpose of the text was not to instruct us about how good or bad the medical doctors were, but to poke fun at the medical profession and to provide entertainment at the cost of those physicians. The narrative is also instructive in illustrating what mundane medical problems could affect late medieval people, who were obviously equally concerned with how to handle hemorrhoids as we might be today.

Health Care, Bathing, and Medicine: Both the Literary and the Practical Dimension

As this brief overview has vividly demonstrated, medieval and early modern poets were keenly aware of the great significance of cleanliness, hygiene, baths, medical care, and health issues. From here we can return to our initial concern about what we really know about hygiene, medicine, and well-being in the pre-modern world. As the list of literary examples, which could easily be expanded, indicates, there was much to laugh about physicians, especially because people seem to have been determined by a healthy dose of suspicion and distrust of the miracle drugs and fake medications commonly applied. At the same time, as all authors confirm, those physicians achieved much fame and gained respect because people were so much in need of miracle cures and hence were gullible for any kind of promises by the alleged authorities in the medical field, that is, by the quacks. However, this does not allow us to ridicule pre-modern health-care altogether, since this kind of humor specifically operated with the assumption that the net of available medical doctors was fairly dense, that people could find medical care, even if many times the applied drugs were of rather dubious nature, and that the infamous early modern “Drecksapotheke” (shit apothecary), or apothecary was commonly stocked with highly dubious drugs, often made of feces, urine, nails, rat skins and blood, foreskins, etc.⁸⁵

⁸⁵ Francis B. Brévant, “Between Medicine, Magic, and Religion: Wonder Drugs in German Medico-Pharmaceutical Treatises of the Thirteenth to the Sixteenth Centuries,” *Speculum* 83 (2008): 1–57; id., “Medical Remedies in Medieval Wonder Drug Treatises: How Efficient Were They?,” *Ain güt geboren edel man: A Festschrift for Winder McConnell on the occasion of his Sixty-Fifth Birth-*

At the same time, we can find numerous solid examples of a great interest in bath culture, which people enjoyed highly wherever they could find healthy, mineral rich, warm springs. Even though far below the standards of our modern time, the medieval world was quite aware of the need of and the means to supply water to people's houses, to a castle, or to a city hall.⁸⁶ In my own contribution

day, ed. Gary C. Shockley. Göppinger Arbeiten zur Germanistik, 757 (Göppingen: Kümmerle, 2011), 72–194. For a considerably skeptical view, see John Wortley, "Three Not-So-Miraculous Miracles," *Health, Disease, and Healing in Medieval Culture*, ed. Sheila Campbell, Bert Hall, and David Klausner (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992), 159–68; for the alternative perspective, see Nancy Siraisi, "The Faculty of Medicine," *Universities in the Middle Ages*, ed. Hilde de Ridder-Symoens (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 360–85; similarly Ortrun Riha, "Das systematologische Defizit der Artesforschung: Überlegungen zur mittelalterlichen deutschen Fachliteratur," *Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen und Literaturen* 229 (1992): 255–76. In his book, *Ein Stockholmer mittelniederdeutsches Arzneibuch aus der zweiten Hälfte des 15. Jahrhunderts* (Stockholm: Kungliga Biblioteket, 1967), Agi Lindgren cites a report on the effectiveness of some of the plants found in the Stockholm medico-pharmaceutical manuscript X 113, written up by the licensed apothecary Lars-Einar Fryklöf. See also Jerry Stannard, "Albertus Magnus and Medieval Herbalism," *Albertus Magnus and the Sciences. Commemorative Essays 1980*, ed. James A. Weisheipl (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1980), 355–77; id., "Rezeptliteratur als Fachliteratur," *Studies on Medieval Fachliteratur: Proceedings of the Special Session on Medieval Fachliteratur of the Sixteenth International Congress on Medieval Studies, Kalamazoo, Michigan (U.S.A.), May 10, 1981*, ed. William Eamon. Scripta, 6 (Brussels: Omirel, UFSAL, 1982), 59–73; id., "Herbal Medicine and Herbal Magic in Pliny's Time," *Pline l'Ancien: Témoin de son temps. Conventus Pliniani Internationalis, Namneti 22–26 Oct. 1985 habitu, acta edenda cvravnt Iacobvs Pigealdu Namnetensis, Iosephvs Orozivs Salmanticensis* (Salamanca: Universidad Pontificia de Salamanca, 1987), 95–106. See also Ortrun Riha, "Medizin und Magie im Mittelalter," *Das Mittelalter* 10 (2005): 64–72. Altogether, however, we pay too much attention to overdramatized reports about horrible ingredients in pre-modern medication sold by rather dubious haberdashers or other pseudo-experts. Official apothecaries existed already since the early fourteenth century, such as the Rats-Apotheke (City Council Apothecary) in Göttingen, Germany, established by Duke Otto of Brunswick in 1332. Chaucer includes a reference to an apothecary – though missing in that specific context, which indicates their rather common presence in medieval society, in his "The Nun's Priest's Tale" in his *Canterbury Tales* (see note 80), lines 181–84. For apothecaries in the medieval Islamic world, see Sharif Kaf al-Ghazal, "The Valuable Contributions of Al-Razi (Rhazes) in the History of Pharmacy During the Middle Ages," *Journal of the International Society for the History of Islamic Medicine*, 3.6 (October 2004: 9–11. Sarah Gordon, in her contribution to the present volume, brings to our attention how much late medieval medical authors formulated very clear concepts about the healing power of water, hence of basic hygiene.

86 Die Wasserversorgung im Mittelalter. Geschichte der Wasserversorgung, 4 (Mainz: Philippe von Zabern, 1991); Wasser auf Burgen im Mittelalter. Geschichte der Wasserversorgung, 7 (Mainz: Philippe von Zabern, 2007); Wasser und Brunnen in alten Zürich: zur Geschichte der Wasserversorgung d. Stadt vom Mittelalter bis ins 19. Jh., ed. Elisabeth Suter (Zürich: Wasserversorgung, 1981).

I will discuss numerous cases, such as the report by the Halle citizen Hans von Waltheym who in 1474 went on a luxurious and comfortable pilgrimage to the Provence and on the way home stayed in Baden east of Zürich and south of Bad Ragaz near Vaduz in order to take advantage of the numerous baths there.⁸⁷ We also have to keep in mind two major factors concerning all our historical and literary documents, not to forget art-historical material. Poets and writers traditionally emphasize more the unusual, the sensational, the shocking, and drastic, instead of treating the banal, the trivial, or the pedestrian. Consequently, dramatic accounts of physicians who carry out seemingly absurd rituals and perform useless, if not even dangerous and deadly processes normally appear in satirical and sarcastic narratives and reflect more the tendency to make fun of that profession than to share accurate information. Those late medieval and early modern writers projected caricatures, but did not reflect intimately on the actual conditions of medieval and early modern hospitals, for instance. Hence, in order to understand critically how medical doctors approached their tasks, we must consult so-called *leechbooks* or medical recipe books, many of which have actually survived. The considerable emphasis there on the use of clean and fresh water, on baths, and on preventative care comes as no little surprise and deserves to be underscored prominently within our context, as Sarah Gordon does in her contribution to this volume.

Health Care in the Pre-Modern World: A Modern Perspective

Finally, if we take into view the great diversity of data, including images, sketches, reports, poems, biographical and hagiographical narratives, etc., regarding hygiene, health, health-care, then we quickly realize how complex the entire situation must have been, already in the pre-modern world. Archeological and medical-forensic investigations working with medieval cemeteries, for instance, are very useful research approaches, but they only tell us one side of the story. Similarly, the literary or religious documents, as we just have seen, reflect only the other side. In other words, we can only hope to gain a more solid understanding

⁸⁷ Ich, Hans von Waltheym: *Bericht über eine Pilgerreise im Jahr 1474 von Halle in die Provinz*, ed. Birte Krüger and Klaus Krüger. *Forschungen zur hallischen Stadtgeschichte*, 21 (Halle a. d. S.: Mitteldeutscher Verlag, 2014), 224–26.

of the world of pre-modern healthcare and medicine, hygiene and drug therapy if we invite numerous different scholars to contribute.

For the present project, this goal was not completely achieved, especially because the scientific aspects could not be addressed fully enough. Nevertheless, the purpose of this volume is rather to look at hygiene, medicine, and well-being in the pre-modern world from a literary and historical perspective, which is, of course, valid enough by itself and in conformity with our entire book series.

The specific theme pursued here picks up a major effort in previous years to reflect in a series of conferences and subsequent publication of the relevant contributions on the impact of Paracelsus (1493–1541) on his contemporaries and his posterity, on health and death, on the development of medicine in the early modern age well into the eighteenth century, and hence also on the question how the individual could achieve happiness in physical and mental terms. All those, however, were not simply medical in nature, but were also discussed in many different ways by poets, artists, philosophers, theologians, and others. Throughout the centuries major intellectuals offered profound insights into the intricacies of health and happiness, whether we think of Seneca, St. Augustine, Boethius, Petrarch, Erasmus of Rotterdam, and then also Paracelsus, or Theophrastus von Hohenheim, and Valentin Weigel.⁸⁸

By the same token, mankind has always been plagued by massive epidemics, whether we think of the Black Death, the Spanish Influenza, AIDS, or Ebola. The first of those epidemics was not restricted to the Middle Ages, but rather emerged already in late antiquity, continued to raise its ugly heads in the following centuries, raged through the late Middle Ages and early modern age, and has continued to reappear until the present, both in Asia and in Africa, in Europe and on the American continent. Humanity is, so it seems, in an ongoing struggle against and with viruses and bacteria, and people actually consist to very large extent of viruses and bacteria in the first place, not only within the body itself, but par-

88 Albrecht Classen, “Gutes Leben und guter Tod von der Spätantike bis zur Gegenwart: Ein philosophisch-ethischer Diskurs über die Jahrhunderte hinweg,” *Gutes Leben und guter Tod von der Spätantike bis zur Gegenwart: Ein philosophisch-ethischer Diskurs über die Jahrhunderte hinweg*, ed. Albrecht Classen. Theophrastus Paracelsus Studien, 4 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2012), 1–109. See also the other contributions to this volume; cf. also *Paracelsus im Kontext der Wissenschaften seiner Zeit: Kultur- und Mentalitätsgeschichtliche Annäherungen*, ed. Albrecht Classen. Theophrastus Paracelsus Studien, 2 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2010); *Religion und Gesundheit in der Frühen Neuzeit: Der heilkundliche Diskurs im 16. Jahrhundert*, ed. Albrecht Classen. Theophrastus Paracelsus Studien, 3 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2011).

ticularly within our very own DNA.⁸⁹ However, we cannot limit our approach to sickness, ailment, and death by focusing on medical issues alone.

Happiness matters for all of us in huge terms, providing the mental framework for a healthy life. The ability to establish a decent level of hygiene has always contributed to people's feeling of well-being, and hence to health. In other words, the intimate intertwining of body and mind, of cleaning insight and outside – in this regard even Till Eulenspiegel was not that far off – and the constant efforts to maintain a solid balance between the physical and the spiritual demands can be identified as the foundational rocks of good human life, irrespective of whatever religious orientation the individual might pursue.

The History of Cleanliness and Hygiene – Once Again: Marguerite de Navarre

It remains highly unclear whether the Middle Ages and early modern age at large were dirtier/cleaner than the early modern age since so much depends on the various circumstances, the social level, rules and regulations, institutional requirements, and natural conditions. There are countless reports about the Baroque culture, for instance, indicating that toilet practices declined even among the highest members of society.⁹⁰ In Marguerite de Navarre's *Heptaméron* (1558), for instance, we learn of two remarkable situations that speak rather badly

⁸⁹ Pest: *Die Geschichte eines Menschheitstraumas*, ed. Mischa Meier (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 2005); John Aberth, *Plagues in World History. Exploring World History* (Lanham, Boulder, et al.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2011); *Pandemic Disease in the Medieval World: Rethinking the Black Death*, ed. Monica H. Green (Kalamazoo, MI, and Bradford: Arc Medieval Press, 2015). As to the relationship between people and viruses, a whole library could be cited here; but see now Milton W. Taylor, *Viruses and Man: A History of Interactions* (Cham: Springer, 2014); Thomas M. Bell, *An Introduction to General Virology* (Burlington, VT: Elsevier Science, 2014).

⁹⁰ Gunter Mann, "Gesundheitswesen und Hygiene in der Zeit des Übergangs von der Renaissance zum Barock," *Medizinhistorisches Journal* 2 (1967): 107–23; Georges Vigarello, *Wasser und Seife, Puder und Parfüm: Geschichte der Körperhygiene seit dem Mittelalter*, trans. from the French by Linda Gränz. Reihe Campus, 1057 (1985; Frankfurt a. M.: Campus-Verlag, 1988); Ulrika Kiby, *Bäder und Badekultur in Orient und Okzident: Antike bis Spätbarock* (Munich: DuMont, 1995); see also the contributions to *Eau & Toilette: Hygiene und Schönheit von -3900 bis +2011: Waschen, Kleiden, Duften ... vom Barock bis zum Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Christine Egli, Dominik Gügel, and Urs Leuzinger (Frauenfeld: Amt für Archäologie des Kantons Thurgau; Salenstein: Napoleomuseum, 2011); Bernd Roeck, *Lebenswelt und Kultur des Bürgertums in der Frühen Neuzeit*, 2nd ed. (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2011).

about hygiene at sixteenth-century courts and elsewhere. I cannot test the validity of these two examples, but they deserve to be mentioned here as well insofar as they are included in this comprehensive collection almost just in passing without any particular concern for their implications regarding hygiene.⁹¹

The twenty-first story discusses the tragic love relationship between Rolandine, a close relative of the Queen of France, and a bastard and impoverished young man whose appearance strikes everyone as extremely ugly. But the two develop a very intense emotional relationship and eventually even declare their marriage before God, but everyone at court is opposed to this ‘sordid’ affair, and especially the Queen makes every effort to block them from seeing each other. This requires that they have to resort to many different strategies and cunning, such as utilizing many different kinds of messengers to deliver his letters to her. One of them is an old and trusted servant, who makes his way to the castle where Rolandine lives with the queen. However, he is suddenly observed and noticed, which leads to a series of persecutions, but the old man at first tries to dissimulate his purpose there, turns to the wall “as if to pass water, tore up the letters into the smallest pieces he could and threw them behind a door” (244). In other words, urinating in the hallways was a common practice and not forbidden. We never learn more about this since other aspects dominate much more heavily, but for our purposes we still need to keep this odd example in mind for the larger picture of early modern hygiene.

In story eleven, a noble lady called Roncex goes visiting a Franciscan monastery one day, and while she has religious conversations, as we might assume, she needs to use the bathroom. Fortunately, there is one, a little and dark privy,

⁹¹ Marguerite de Navarre, *Heptaméron*, ed. Renja Salminen. Textes littéraires français, 516 (Geneva: Droz, 1999); for the English translation, I have used Marguerite de Navarre, *The Heptameron*, trans. with an intro. by P. A. Chilton (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England: Penguin, 1984); for some of the relevant studies on Marguerite and her work, see, for instance, Marguerite de Navarre, *The Heptameron*, trans. with an intro. by P. A. Chilton (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England: Penguin, 1984); Nicole Cazauran, *L'Heptaméron de Marguerite de Navarre* (Paris: Société d’Édition d’enseignement Supérieur, 1978); Jamil Chaker (Shakir), *Origines et formes de la nouvelle de Marguerite de Navarre*. Publications de la Faculté des sciences humaines et sociales de Tunis, IV Série, Lettres, 7 (Tunis: Publications de la Faculté des sciences humaines et sociales, 1995); *International Colloquium Celebrating the 500th Anniversary of the Birth of Marguerite de Navarre, April 13 & 14, 1992, Agnes Scott College*, ed. Régine Reynolds-Cornell (Birmingham, AL: Summa Publications, 1995); Patricia F. and Rouben C. Cholakian, *Marguerite de Navarre: Mother of the Renaissance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006); *A Companion to Marguerite de Navarre*, ed. Gary Ferguson and Mary B. McKinley. Brill’s Companions to the Christian Tradition (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2013); Joshua M. Blaylock, “A Skeleton in the Closet: Secrecy and Anamorphosis in Marguerite de Navarre’s *Heptameron*,” *Sixteenth Century Journal* 45 (2014): 951–72.

and the narrator has no hesitation to describe its appearance in clear terms: “It was the place used by all the Franciscans, and all over the seat and everywhere else there was the fruits of Bacchus and Ceres” (156). The poor lady has no choice and must resort to this filthy privy, which might consist of a row of toilets because we are told: “this poor lady ... went and sat down on the filthiest and dirtiest seat in the whole place” (156). She is entirely soiled, including her clothing, and does not dare to move in order to avoid further staining, so she calls out for help to her maid who immediately suspects that her lady is being raped by one of the Franciscans and rallies everyone to come to the rescue.

The scene which appears before their eyes could not be more embarrassing for the lady: “... bottom bare lest her gown should be soiled, and shrieking for one of her women to come and clean her up. A splendid spectacle for the men who had come running to her rescue. And the only trace of a Franciscan was the filth stuck to the poor lady’s behind” (156).

The Franciscans possess a privy, and it might have a row of seats, but it is not all that clear. The narrator only focuses on the utter dirt and the men’s bad bathroom behavior which causes the lady so much distress and shame. Her horror must have been the result of a shockingly different toilet setting where no cleanliness could be found. We do not know how the friars could use their privy without soiling themselves or why no one was in charge of cleaning it, but the point consists of the contrast between female needs and expectations of bathroom cleanliness and male behavior – unfortunately, similar complaints are raised by women all over the world about men even today, but that’s beside the point here.

The Impact of Syphilis

But we need to consider a very different change that affected all of late medieval Europe with huge implications for the health-care system, general hygiene, and medicine. The appearance of syphilis, probably having been imported from the Americas, by Columbus’s crew, basically brought about a paradigm shift. The first written records of an outbreak of syphilis in Europe occurred in 1494/1495 in Naples, Italy, during a French invasion. Because it was spread by returning French troops, the disease was known as “French disease,” and it was not until 1530 that the term “syphilis” was first applied by the Italian physician and poet

Girolamo Fracastoro.⁹² This outbreak of an epidemic had the catastrophic consequences that public bath houses all over Europe lost massive numbers of customers and had to close their doors. At the same time, in Córdoba, Spain, King Philipp II banned the use of the Arabic language, wearing of corresponding clothing, public gambling and games, and public bathing was forbidden as a heathen custom, predominantly associated with the Arabic culture. About 900 of those houses were allegedly closed and destroyed. In Nuremberg, the bath houses were not closed, but those suffering from syphilis were no longer granted entrance.⁹³

Could we hence argue that human society in the post-medieval world lost the traditionally high hygienic status as might have been standard in the Middle Ages, at least among the aristocracy? Just as in the case of Marguerite's tale where the old servant simply turns to the wall to let go his water, in the seventeenth century the famous Elisabeth (Liselotte) von der Pfalz (1652–1722), wife of Philippe I, Duke of Orléans, younger brother of Louis XIV of France, and mother of France's ruler during the Regency, complained in some of her thousands of letters that too many people living in Versailles had to resort to corners and hallways to meet their

⁹² Alfred W. Crosby, Jr., *The Columbian Exchange: Biological and Cultural Consequences of 1492*. Contributions in American Studies, 2 (Westport, CT: Greenwood Pub. Co. [1972]); Claude Quétel, *History of Syphilis*, trans. Judith Braddock and Brian Pike (1986; London: Polity Press in association with Basil Blackwell, 1990); for the earliest legislation against the use of public baths in order to combat the spread of the disease, see Karl Sudhoff, "Die ersten Massnahmen der Stadt Nürnberg gegen die Syphilis in den Jahren 1496 und 1497," *Archiv für Dermatologie und Syphilis* 116 (1913): 1–30; cf. also the contribution to this volume by Thomas G. Benedek; and for a useful overview, the online article at: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_syphilis (last accessed on June 10, 2016).

⁹³ Detlev Quintern, "Wunder, Wollust, Wohlbefinden – Das türkische Bad als Utopie: Ein Kulturvergleich," *Wasserwelten: Badekultur und Technik. Begleitschrift zur Ausstellung Wasserwelten im Landesmuseum Natur und Mensch Oldenburg, 15. August –17. Oktober 2010*, ed. Mamoun Fansa. Schriftenreihe des Landesmuseums Natur und Mensch, 77 (Mainz: Phillip von Zabern, 2010), 198–220; Ralf Richard Wagner, "... undt wan eine Prinzeß auf die retirade gehen will ...: Bad- und Toilettenräume in den Schlössern der Kurpfalz," *Das Stille Örtchen: Tabu und Reinlichkeit bey Hofe*, ed. Wolfgang Wiese and Wolfgang Schröck-Schmidt (Berlin and Munich: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2011), 120–31; Werner Heinz, "'ignorenz der doktoren, welche sie umbs leben gebracht ...': Medizin und Hygiene im 17. Jahrhundert," *Gutes Leben und guter Tod von der Spätantike bis zur Gegenwart: Ein philosophisch-ethischer Diskurs über die Jahrhunderte hinweg*, ed. Albrecht Classen. *Theophrastus Paracelsus Studien*, 4 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2012), 251–79; here 271–72. See also Nadejde Laneyrie-Dagen et Georges Vigarello, *La toilette: naissance de l'intime = The Invention of Privacy* (Paris: Hazan and Musée Marmottan Monet, [2015]).

bathroom needs, obviously because there were not enough toilets in that famous castle.⁹⁴

However, we probably have to be much more careful in the assessment of hygiene at Versailles or at any other contemporary castle since we do not have sufficient data for either perspective, with the situation having been awful and smelly, or with all this being the result of modern myths of the dirty past. After all, when Liselotte complained about the malpractice, she also complained about all of the courtly mores and cultural conditions in France and might have exaggerated considerably as well. Since she was, as we would say today, a rather grumpy person, we would have to regard her negative comments about the common hygiene at Versailles, with caution, if not even skepticism.

We can see clearly, to be sure, how much hygiene, health, and medicine are really at the core of cultural history, as the many contributors indicate with their papers compiled in this volume. In this regard, both the historical-literary and the medical and practical evidence matters greatly and should really be viewed in tandem.

Critical Summaries of the Contributions

All these insights and perspectives have been the driving motivations to bring together a large group of international scholars interested in this global topic of hygiene, medicine, and well-being in the pre-modern world. After each contribution had been fully reviewed and edited, I took it upon myself to re-read each one again as critically as possible and to compose summaries. In those summaries I also include some additional research and relevant literature that can widen our perspectives. In other words, the following remarks are not supposed to be regarded simply as brief versions of the individual contributions; instead they aim at reflecting on the individual observations, at contextualizing them, and thus at presenting a cohesive concept altogether.

⁹⁴ There are many webpages that address cultural-historical issues such as hygiene and the availability of toilets in the pre-modern world, but they mostly lack in evidence and convey mostly modern myths about the past. See, for instance, the online blog dealing with this issue, unfortunately lacking in scholarly support: <http://thisisversaillesmadame.blogspot.com/2014/04/the-lack-of-toilets.html> (last accessed on April 18, 2016). See, however, William Ritchey Newton and Willy Kessels, *Derrière la façade: vivre au château de Versailles au XVIII^e siècle*. Rpt. (2008; Paris: Galerie Alain Paviot, 2011).

Already in the early Middle Ages we hear of many attempts to provide health care both to the elite and to the general public, such as the well-known Anglo-Saxon *Bald's Leechbook* composed sometime in the late ninth century in which the author apparently tried to convey to his audience what medical practices in the Mediterranean world might be useful for the situation in England. The first book deals with external, the second with internal disorders, while the third book summarizes other medical recipes as they were characteristic of the Anglo-Saxon world. Even though many of the ingredients recommended might make us shudder today, an experiment in 2015 demonstrated that some pharmaceutical mixture containing garlic and the bile of a cow's stomach actually achieved the desired effect being a potential agent for use against Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA).⁹⁵

Similarly, *The Lacnunga*, a tenth-century medical tract, offers recipes that include a variety of natural, herbal products, rituals, prayers, and incantations, and we can thus observe an approach to healing which seems to share many similarities with postmodern integrative medicine. Health, in other words, as those early medieval recipe books signal, cannot simply be maintained by material medicine, but strongly depends as well on spiritual concepts supporting all life.

Warren Tormey offers a critical reading suggesting that those early recipe books reflect a significant paradigm shift from the Anglo-Saxon pagan past to an early Christian, Mediterranean-influenced concept of medicine especially with respect to what was identified as "evil" both in spiritual and material terms. The difference between a medical and a religious explanation of the sickness affecting body and mind was minimal, as also the Old English *Herbarium* confirms. The proper selection and use of medicinal herbs could ward off, as we can read, evil at large, demons, and satanical figures. Tormey notes that we can thus identify a significant merging of pagan and early medieval Christian teachings in the field of medicine and healing. The same applies to continental, especially Germanic and Old High German charms that assumed Christian features only in the course of time because the missionaries worked closely with the local authority figures

⁹⁵ The experiment was carried out by Freya Harrison, a microbiologist, and Christina Lee, an Anglo-Saxon scholar, both at the University of Nottingham, UK. The key approach was to observe carefully the right mixture of ingredients: "Using exactly the right method also seems to be crucial, says Harrison, as another group tried to recreate the remedy in 2005 and found that their potion failed to kill bacteria grown in a dish." <https://www.newscientist.com/article/dn27263-anglo-saxon-remedy-kills-hospital-superbug-mrsa/> (last accessed on June 10, 2016); see also the "Geleitwort" by Andrea Hofmeister-Winter to Elisabeth Sulzer, *Darmgesundheit im Mittelalter* (see note 64), 5–7.

and were apparently hesitant to suppress ancient cultural practices upon which the population relied in cases of sickness.⁹⁶

Of course, as Tormey also points out, the Church viewed those pagan recipes with suspicion and tended to equate them with magic and superstition, and yet it was not in a position to repress the traditional medicine which seems to have been more effective than we have believed. We might even assume that this tension between official Church-approved recipes and operations and those advocated by the pagans continued throughout the centuries and probably found its most dramatic and horrifying expression in the early-modern witch craze. In the Anglo-Saxon culture, however, the Church did not yet have the same power and had rather to adapt and allow these forms of medical and religious synchronism, such as expressed in the *Leechbook*, which made it possible to fight 'evil' both physically and spiritually. In other words, even in the area of hygiene and medicine did the religious tensions play out, which underscores how much those aspects mattered already then in general terms.

The presence of evil was of great concern for both Christians and pagans, and both sides in a way met half way in terms of drawing on rituals, sacred words, and herbal means to fight this arch enemy. Curiously, herbal medicine was going to be fully included in monastic and other medical practices from early on, such as in the case of Hildegard of Bingen, but in the world of Anglo-Saxon culture herbs were commonly used to fend off evil in whatever form it might appear, which apparently also met the approval of the Catholic church. After all, as Tormey underscores, many of the recipes also included Christian rituals that normally formed part of the mass, which hence must have appeased the clerics vis-à-vis those otherwise pagan recipes. In particular, fighting against evil by means of herbs and rituals the pagans could be convinced of the attractiveness of the Christian church since it proved to be receptive to the ancient medications and combined them with their own liturgical practices for the same purposes.

Mental disorder, above all, was increasingly associated with the workings of demons; hence both the Church and the pagan medical practitioners pursued the same interests in fighting off those 'evil' forces. This made it possible for the clerics increasingly even to include sermons, prayers, and hymns, thus slowly

⁹⁶ These Old High German charms have been discussed already for a long time; see now Albrecht Classen, "Old High German Missionary Activities by Means of *Zauber sprüche* – Charms: Anthropological-Religious Universals in the Early Middle Ages," *Kościoly w dobie chrystianizacji (Churches in the Era of Christianization)*, ed. Marian Rębkowski. Wolińskie Spotkania Mediewistyczne, III (Szczecin/Stettin: Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology, Department of Archaeology, 2016), 77–88. Chiara Benati, in her contribution to this volume, offers an extensive discussion of charms from the early Middle Ages to the early modern age.

occupying, if not colonizing the field of medicine and hygiene in the Anglo-Saxon world. Simultaneously, the pre-literate, oral traditions grounded in pagan practices maintained their foothold in these herbal recipe books. The synchronism worked so well because it operated on a universal basis common in many world religions, combining the oral components with learned elements. Tormey indicates also how much such mixing of pagan with Christian elements interwove contemporary secular poetry, such as *Beowulf*, and it could even be found in healing manuals by early monastic writers who resorted to ancient Greek and Roman texts to specify the power of Christian teachings with regards to sicknesses whose etiology was more and more identified with demonology threatening the human spirit.

The discussion of these Anglo-Saxon healing manuals thus makes it possible to grasp a more universal cultural concept built on the merging of pagan and Christian, of oral and literate dimensions. After all, as Tormey concludes, the treatment of mental illnesses, that is, those that were allegedly related to the workings of demons or even the devil, represented considerable challenges to the traditional healers and the Christian doctors alike, who therefore happily joined forces to fend off evil with all means available to them.⁹⁷

Continuing with the examination of the *Leechbook*, Daniel F. Pigg emphasizes the extent to which Anglo-Saxon society commanded a surprisingly high level of medical understanding and struggled hard to help those affected by all kinds of diseases, as reflected by numerous contemporary medical treatises even in the vernacular, either translated from the Latin into the vernacular or based on autochthonous recipes finally collected in written form. While Tormey reviewed Bald's *Leechbook* from a more general perspective, comparing the pagan with the Christian components, Pigg investigates how much the author was aware of gender-specific illnesses and wounds. And indeed, Bald was very clear about women's and children's medical needs and health conditions, in contrast to those by men. Pigg here focuses on the degree to which masculinity above all is represented in this collection of recipes.

⁹⁷ See also the contributions to *Pagans and Christians: The Interplay Between Christian Latin and Traditional Germanic Cultures in Early Medieval Europe. Proceedings of the Second Germania Latina Conference held at the University of Groningen, May 1992*, ed. Tette Hofstra (Groningen: Forsten, 1995); David Petts, *Pagan and Christian: Religious Change in Early Medieval Europe. Debates in Archaeology* (London: Bristol Classical Press, 2011); *Religious Practices and Christianization of the Late Antique City (4th – 7th cent.)*, ed. Aude Busin. *Religions in the Graeco-Roman World*, 182 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2015).

Generally, the *Leechbook* displays a clear emphasis on heat as the critical condition of the human body, especially, however, of male bodies since they have to produce semen. In addition, loss of hair, sexual desire or lack thereof, military wounds, etc. strongly occupy the author's interest. While heroic epics and later courtly romances tended to present ways how masculinity was to be performed in wars or at tournaments, here in this recipe book we are given concrete data as to men's medical needs, such as how to regrow hair.

Whereas previous research has explored masculinity primarily in literary texts and in chronicle accounts, Pigg suggests to examine the specifics of the *Leechbook* as a textual mine for our understanding of early medieval masculinity within the Anglo-Saxon framework. Loss of hair, above all, represented a potential decline in political and social status. Similarly, lack of sexual desire or excessive lustfulness had a deep impact on a man's position within his society, so it is not surprising to find specific recipes to help a man regain his balance in that regard. The *Leechbook* thus proves to be an ideal study object reflecting on Anglo-Saxon society at large insofar as the medical advice provided here reflects on gender in many different, significant ways. Pigg's study offers numerous implications for future studies on medieval masculinity and healthcare insofar as medical authors obviously revealed through their selection of recipes the characteristic composition of their clients and the general conditions of hygiene and well-being prevalent at that time period.

While individuals have had their own problems in achieving a certain level of hygiene in their homes throughout time, communities have always faced much greater challenges because of the density of the living quarters. From early on, monasteries had to establish specific rules and regulations pertaining to toilet habits if they did not want to suffer from rampant sickness and other afflictions. What did the various founders of monastic organizations have to say about human waste, drinking water, personal hygiene, and the like?

Belle S. Tuten turns her attention to the Benedictines and examines their famous rules regarding specifics concerning handling bodily waste. After all, as she argues, this aspect was just as important for the monks as was the daily ritual of praying and reading, since physical and spiritual components made up the holistic set-up of all monastic life. The ability to control the body and to manage even the effluents was just as significant as the ability to fast, to learn, to study, and to practice monastic rituals.

The body has its own rhythm, and all monastic rules addressed it, either indirectly or directly. This also applies to St. Benedict's rules, which Tuten examines carefully as to how they reflected the natural needs to vacate the human waste at regular intervals. This was of particular importance for the children (oblates)

and young members (novices) in monasteries who first had to learn how to adapt to the norms required from all adult monks. All this went hand in hand with the great concern about the seductive power of sexuality, which likewise had to be strictly controlled and repressed; hence the various rules about the monks' sleeping habits and their control at night by the abbot or the prior. Insofar as in monasteries all aspects of human life were subject to control and supervision, so urination and defecation were similarly regimented strictly.

Various authors specifically addressed nocturnal emission, but they normally admitted that since this happened without willful intention, this left the individual monks guilt-free. By the same token, the treatment of human effluents was an important aspect as well since it represented physical sinfulness. Nevertheless, all bodily functions had to be controlled and regulated, hence also waste, a practice which was extremely important for all monastic communities already in the early Middle Ages. Even a most ascetic life style, as recommended by Cassian, could not repress the bodily needs altogether, which motivated later writers to embrace a more moderate regulation for the entire monastic community, including eating and drinking habits, and hence the use of the toilet. However, in order to facilitate this systematic approach, the various authors, including St. Benedict, addressed eating and drinking habits, such as avoiding red meats, which made it more possible to observe specific hours to visit the lavatories. At the same time, some authors voiced concern about monks who might not be able to concentrate on their duties and rituals if they were not well fed or had not taken care of their bodily needs properly. Some even warned that tired monks would not be in a position to pay full attention to the religious service, while overeating could disturb the daily structure of using the bathrooms collectively.

Not surprisingly, monastic authors of recipe books, such as the *St. Gall Botanicus*, were considerably concerned with digestive problems. Despite all efforts by the monastic superiors, it is highly likely, as Tuten emphasizes, that many monks or nuns suffered from worm infections, diarrhea, and indigestion, which required extensive attention to their physical needs. In the larger context, as we may conclude, medieval monasteries generally seem to have upheld a high degree of hygiene and took good care of their members, since a disturbed body could not aspire for the purity of the mind – a wisdom which certainly holds true until today.

Water and health have always been associated with each other, and this particularly in the monastic cultures of the high Middle Ages, as James Smith discusses in his contribution, especially because monks or nuns were focused both on bodily and spiritual cleanliness. Already famous Aelred of Rievaulx (1110–1167) addressed this topic in his reflections on monastic life, emphasizing the necessity for the members of the monastic community to maintain a high level of hygiene.

Bodily cleanliness was identified as a symbolic of spiritual cleanliness, and this in noticeable contrast to earlier monastic practices, though Belle S. Tuten in this volume also alerts us to considerable misunderstandings in that regard. For Cistercians at large the physical bath was the precondition for the spiritual bath, hence the great emphasis on water within the entire Cistercian Order.⁹⁸ Some writers went so far as to identify the grounds of Clairvaux as a *locus amoenus*, thus projecting the monastic space as paradisiacal because of its cleanliness. After all, as Adelard of Bath or Bernard Silvestris emphasized, the external, physical world simply mirrored God's nature.

In his investigations, James Smith concentrates on the Cistercian preacher-abbot Guerric of Igny; the Victorine canon regular Godfrey of Saint-Victor; and the letter-writing Benedictine abbot Peter of Celle. The first translated the geographic landscape of the Holy Land as described in the Bible into a metaphorical, spiritual world where rivers and lakes mirrored God's working here on earth. Bodies of water assumed religious significance through their baptismal function, as described in Scriptures. Smith calls this phenomenon spiritual ontology through which epiphany or religious enlightenment was possible by way of studying physical objects, such as water, which allowed the true Christian to receive baptism. Guerric of Igny referred particularly to the river Jordan which could provide, spiritually speaking, new religious visions. Heavenly and earthly rivers were explicitly aligned with each other, which created a theological paradigm of aquatic hermeneutics which many other authors copied throughout the Middle Ages.

Smith traces the tradition of this water symbolism also in the works of twelfth-century Godfrey of Saint-Victor who wrote texts for the school classes and creative religious works that were mystically inspired and thus often predicated on the symbolic imagery of water in its myriad of manifestations. Godfrey perceived water as the spiritual venue to acquire knowledge derived from God. However, the schoolmaster in Godfrey likewise comes forward in that he addressed very specifically basic challenges for his students who had to go through many layers of difficult material in order to comprehend their lessons both practically and spiritually. The mechanical arts appeared to him like polluted rivers that had to be left behind in order to gain true, divine insights in all life. Thereby he challenged the traditional approach toward learning by the Victorines and asked for a more mystically imbued approach to human understanding, which he achieved through the application of water images, polluted versus clean. Relying on the pilgrimage

⁹⁸ Ulrich Knapp, *Die Zisterzienser und das Wasser* (Petersberg, Kr. Fulda: Michael Imhof Verlag, 2016).

imagery, Godfrey aimed for a true curriculum through which the learner could gain access to pure, spiritual water.

Finally, turning to Peter of Celle (ca. 1115–ca. 1183), Smith emphasizes how much this Cistercian intellectual, who was extremely well connected with his contemporaries, relied on water imagery, or rather concepts of bodily hygiene, when he discussed spiritual cleanliness and the salvation of the soul in terms of cleanliness. As he argues, cleaning the body from detritus was the first step toward cleaning the soul itself, so washing, in its multiple level of meaning, had a direct impact on spiritual illumination and salvation. In a practical sense, Peter strongly espoused the idea that physical baths should be the springboard for spiritual baths, since body and mind had to be aligned with each other.

Even though these authors referred to water and hygiene primarily in a metaphorical or allegorical sense, all their texts implied the high level of interest in bodily cleanliness and the practice of keeping the body clean since it was recognized as a fundamental premise for higher levels of learning and spiritual endeavors. Neither Peter of Celle nor Gueric of Igny, nor Godfrey of Saint-Victor would have drawn so much from the imagery of water and bathing for their didactic and theological purposes if they had not been thoroughly familiar with a sophisticated bathing culture at least within the world of the Cistercian Order.⁹⁹

Although today the disease of leprosy is well under control, insofar as modern medicine has learned its etiology and developed effective medicine since Gerhard Henrik Armauer Hansen had identified the bacterium *Mycobacterium leprae* in 1873 as the basic cause, the stigma attached to leprosy continues to be a major social marker. Little wonder that this was the case also in the pre-modern age, as is perhaps best illustrated in the short but powerful verse narrative “Der arme Heinrich” by the Middle High German poet Hartmann von Aue (ca. 1190). The protagonist, though a prince, retires to a farm after he has given away all of his possessions as a consequence of his leprosy. Everyone is basically shunning him, although the loyal farmer and his wife take good care of him. Heinrich knows from a medical doctor in Montpellier that there is no remedy for him, while another doctor in Salerno had informed him that the blood of a nubile young

⁹⁹ Jan Olaf Rüttgardt, “Gottes Geist über dem Wasser: zur Wasserkunst der Zisterzienser,” *Gesellschaft für Niedersächsische Kirchengeschichte: Jahrbuch der Gesellschaft für Niedersächsische Kirchengeschichte* 92 (1994): 69–84; see also the contributions to *Die Wasserbaukunst im Kloster Loccum. Studien zur Geschichte, Kunst und Kultur der Zisterzienser*, 25 (Berlin: Lukas-Verlag, 1996); most recently, see Małgorzata Milecka, “The Cistercians Large-Scale Water Systems,” *Architectus* 1.31 (2012): 13–20.

woman, willing to die for him, could bring about the miracle. One of the farmer's daughters ultimately learns about this secret and quickly decides to sacrifice herself for Heinrich. Although the parents are at first strictly opposed, as is the leper, the girl's incredible rhetorical skill and her religious arguments convince all of them to accept this sacrifice. However, when Heinrich later gazes through a hole in the wall to the physician's operation room, where the young woman is just about to be killed, he experiences an epiphany and rejects her sacrifice, accepting, by contrast, God's wishes with regards to him. While the girl angrily fights against this change of plans, since she had hoped thereby to gain faster access to heaven – a form of religiously motivated suicide – God observes Heinrich's inner transformation and thus allows him to get well again.¹⁰⁰

This literary-religious example was certainly grounded in historical reality, as Erin S. Lynch illustrates in her study of the leprosarium Grand-Beaulieu near Clermont-Ferrand. Throughout the pre-modern era, and well into the late nineteenth century, leprosy cut across all social classes and religious groups and often ostracized the afflicted person, as Hartmann's story also indicates most dramatically. This was the case in historical reality as well, which Lynch probes by examining how that leprosarium, founded in 1054, operated throughout the high Middle Ages. In particular, she is interested in the psychological and social consequences which resulted from the victims' isolation, whether they ended up in a leprosarium or elsewhere.

The absence of human touch – the lepers were the non-touchables – exerted, as Lynch suggests, a strong influence on the leper's behavior and attitude toward his/her society. After all, both legal measures and the attempts by the Church to

¹⁰⁰ Albrecht Classen, "Herz und Seele in Hartmanns von Aue "Der arme Heinrich." Der mittelalterliche Dichter als Psychologe?," *Mediaevistik* 14 (2003): 7–30; id., "Utopian Space in the Countryside: Love and Marriage Between a Knight and a Peasant Girl in Medieval German Literature. Hartmann von Aue's *Der arme Heinrich*, Anonymous, 'Dis ist von dem Heselin,' Walther von der Vogelweide, Oswald von Wolkenstein, and Late-Medieval Popular Poetry," *Rural Space in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Age: The Spatial Turn in Premodern Studies*, ed. Albrecht Classen, with the collaboration of Christopher R. Clason. Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture, 9 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2012), 251–279. This is a 'classical' text in the canon of medieval German literature; for the most recent edition along with a modern German translation, see Hartmann von Aue, *Der arme Heinrich*, ed. and trans. Nathanael Busch and Jürgen Wolf (Stuttgart: Reclam, 2015); Hartmann von Aue, *Der arme Heinrich: Mittelhochdeutscher Text und Übersetzung*, commentary by Volker Mertens, ed. Volker Mertens (Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 2016). There are many good translations into English or French available; see, for instance, *The Complete Works of Hartmann von Aue*, trans. with commentary by Frank Tobin, Kim Vivian, Richard H. Lawson (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001).

help the lepers, granting them freedom of tithes, allotting them their own parish churches and priests, and cemeteries, basically isolated them from the rest of society even further. Specific local regulations, such as the *Statuts de la Léproserie de Grand-Beaulieu de Chartres* (1264), which Lynch analyzes in particular, created a rigid system which barred the lepers radically from other communities that hoped thereby to avoid any contact and hence to be free from the same affliction.

Drawing on modern neurobehavioral research, however, Lynn theorizes that lepers, because of their long-term suffering from social isolation and especially from absence of human touch, went through a transformation in their overall behavior, resulting in particular forms of aggression. This could help to explain particular types of literary episodes where lepers appear in larger groups and perform especially violent acts, which we might now relate to their long-term loss of haptic experiences with healthy people. Indeed, if we can trust the scientific explanation of today, many phenomena related to lepers as described in the chronicles and the fictional sources could now make much more sense; the victims of this disease lived in social isolation, deprived of tactile contacts, and were, theoretically, impacted in terms of their fundamental empathic development.¹⁰¹

The situation in Hartmann von Aue's "Der arme Heinrich" might support this observation because the protagonist feels very little sympathy for the farmer's daughter when she declares her willingness to die for him. Only when he finally gazes through the hole in the wall and recognizes her angelic beauty – maybe his own soul about to die – does he change his mind and accept his own mortality. Otherwise, there would not have been a change of heart in him, and God would thus not have healed him either.

Lynch's hypothesizes, with solid scientific background, that lepers lived in spatial isolation and were hence robbed of their ability to form empathetic relationships with their fellow people in a sensitive manner. All this also allows us to recognize how much the pre-modern world was deeply concerned with plague victims and individuals with disability, and yet also did not know how to treat them respectfully and interactively.

From here we turn to a comparative analysis involving water as an essential ingredient for hygiene and healthcare throughout time. In her contribution, Debra L.

¹⁰¹ See now my study on some important literary characters suffering from leprosy, "The Marginalized Figure of the Dwarf and the Leper: Disability in the World of Tristan and Isolde and Beyond," to appear in *Studi medievali*.

Stoudt first examines the way how the famous mystic, *magistra*, and medical healer Hildegard of Bingen (1098–1179) and later the highly respected scientist and physician Georgius Agricola (1494–1555) viewed water for their own medical practices and their cosmologies.

Not surprisingly, Hildegard perceived water in its natural function as essential for healthcare at large since it was one of the four basic materials (fire and air, water and soil), from which all human and other life was created according to the medieval belief system regarding the natural world. Water makes it possible, as she suggested, to cleanse the human body from all filth both physically and spiritually – a notion we have observed already above in other contexts. Hildegard correlated water to all geographic directions and all life forces, and differentiated bodies of water according to their cleanliness, dirtiness, usefulness, nutritional value, and spiritual worth. Certain water (rainwater, snow, pond water, hot water, cold water, etc.) carries healing power; other types of water are dangerous and even toxic. Hence, as Stoudt observes, Hildegard perceived the function of water in connection with all the other elements and situated its healing properties in the proper relationship with the physical universe and then, above all, with the divine.

Without water, the fundamental connector among all the elements and all spiritual entities would be missing. Both the Creation story and the account of Adam and Eve, hence the beginning of humanity, are closely associated with water in many different fashions. Little wonder that Hildegard discussed water also within the context of the four humors and determined its particular function as a material and spiritual cleaning agent.

In practical terms, Hildegard outlined specific temperatures for water to display its healing effects, whereupon she metaphorized rivers as arteries of the earth, originating from the sea. It remains enigmatic, however, why she would have argued that way contrary to all experience since she would have observed with her own eyes that the water of the river Rhine near her own monastery flowed downstream, not the opposite. Only if we accept the idea that she projected this image in order to identify water as a metaphor of the allegorical body earth could we make good sense out of it. After all, Hildegard was not interested in a geographical mapping of the river system in Germany; instead, she discussed river water and the various water properties in order to highlight how different water temperatures and water qualities could assist in specific healing processes. Why she did not explain in further details the practical aspects of running water in her own community of the Rupertsberg remains, as Stoudt admits, a curious enigma. But we can be certain that water in general assumed a central role in Hildegard's allegorical, moral, religious, and medical thinking.

But she was certainly not the only one so deeply concerned with and focused on water, as Stoudt subsequently discusses with regard to the concepts developed by Theophrastus Paracelsus (1493–1541) and Georg Agricola (1494–1555), above all.¹⁰² The latter was primarily interested in water for the purpose of mining and yet drew his inspiration mostly from classical authors and his own personal observations and experiments, whereas he basically ignored his medieval forerunners and their allegorical and spiritual explanations. Nevertheless, he also regarded water as crucial for the understanding of this world and provided highly detailed descriptions of water from various river bodies, some of which he identified as curative, while others he regarded as dangerous for human health because of their negative properties. In a way, we can regard him thus as an important forerunner of modern-day balneology, and at the same time, even though he certainly did not acknowledge it, as an avatar of Hildegard in his critical examination of all kinds of water for medical treatment.

Stoudt, however, clearly alerts us to the considerable differences between Hildegard's and Agricola's approaches, insofar as the former mostly operated on a cosmological-religious level and correlated water with spiritual qualities, whereas the latter combined his classical sources with his personal experiments, which apparently defines the new concept of how to explain this world and its water by means of humanistic categories. Nevertheless, despite their alternative understanding of water, both writers confirmed, once again, how fundamental water had been in pre-modern religious, medical, and scientific discourse, building bridges to the cosmic universe. In short, both authors explicitly subscribed, each to his/her own within their respective spiritual and intellectual mind-sets, to a discourse focused on water as one of the essential elements (or humors) defining this world.¹⁰³

Since late antiquity the genre of bestiaries, based on the famous *Physiologus* (second or third century), enjoyed great popularity, impressively represented by the thirteenth-century *Northumberland Bestiary*, which Cynthia White studies in order to shed light on the profound involvement of the medieval clergy (preachers) in the topic of health care. Even though they did not operate as medical doctors, they consistently emphasized the essential need to work primarily on healing the soul, before turning to bodily needs. While bestiaries contain a wealth of zoolog-

¹⁰² See also the contribution to this volume by Thomas G. Benedek.

¹⁰³ Georgius Agricola, 500 Jahre: Wissenschaftliche Konferenz vom 25. – 27. März 1994 in Chemnitz, Freistaat Sachsen ..., ed. Friedrich Naumann (Basel: Birkhäuser Basel, 1994). See also the contribution to this volume by David Tomíček.

ical information presented through an allegorical lens, they ultimately aimed at teaching their listeners/readers a spiritual message concerning the well-being of the soul which was possible to achieve by listening to God's words contained in the allegorical text. Fundamentally, then, bestiaries served preachers above all who utilized those texts as religious quarries for their sermons, in which they insisted on the power of confession, repentance, and absolution as the basis for health in an abstract sense of the word.

This would not imply that medieval clerics would have competed against medical doctors or would have fought against the application of regular medication, or against the treatment of wounds, as the modern clichés or stereotypes about the Middle Ages tend to convey. Instead, the bestiaries outlined how members of the Church were encouraged to address the internal sickness affecting the soul, which had to be healed above all before or while the medical doctor was working to take care of the physical illness. The bestiaries mirrored, as White highlights, God's infinite and omnipotent power over the world, which explains the authors' attempts to give symbolic and allegorical meaning to the various animals in those text collections. The true and ultimate healer was, after all, Christ as *medicus*, and the primary object worthy of healing was not the body, but the soul.

Even though Galen's medical teachings were going to have a huge impact on the emergence of innovative medicine in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, especially via his concept of the four humors, his spiritual approach to healing the body already provided the theoretical basis for the much older tradition of the bestiaries. After all, Galen had argued that all body parts are aligned with spiritual elements, and without considering that dimension, no true healing could be achieved. This concept was to have a great impact both on Muslim and Christian medicine in late antiquity and the early Middle Ages. White points out how much such orators as Aelius Aristides and theologians as St. Augustine, and, subsequently, the patristic writers and the anonymous author of the *Physiologus* pursued this religious approach to healing in their own writings as a complementary approach to the practical medical measure. In fact, they perceived themselves as medical doctors of the human soul.

This then allows us to gain a much better handle on the genre of bestiaries, which were not simply absurd or fanciful, but operated very carefully and strategically to develop allegorical teachings about the needs of the soul. The bestiaries explain the world spiritually and shed significant light on medieval concepts of what true healing meant in theological terms. As White alerts us, hence, the bestiaries would have to be read parallel to ordinary medical recipe books, although they served primarily theological purposes and, as in the case of the *Northum-*

berland Bestiary, intended to prepare their readers for the afterlife, where true spiritual health was finally achieved.¹⁰⁴

However, the care of the body was not to be neglected either, as the textual analysis reveals, because physical health was also necessary as the material basis for the soul to achieve purity and salvation. Yet, overall, in order to understand the rich genre of bestiaries in the context of hygiene, medicine, and well-being in the pre-modern world, as White urges us to do, we must recognize the spiritual purposes in those texts that contributed to the discourse on health care.

Medieval and early modern literature knows of many examples of bathing, often combined with bloodletting as a therapeutic measure, as we can observe, for example, in Gottfried von Straßburg's *Tristan*. Such settings, however, were often employed for very different purposes than gaining or increasing one's health, and could serve even for carrying out a murderous plot, as Rosa A. Perez demonstrates in her analysis first of Marie de France's "Eliduc" (ca. 1190) and then of the Occitan romance *Flamenca* (thirteenth century). Bathing proves to be crucially important for dissimulation, simulation, and transformation in those particular situations in which the protagonists attempt to defeat or eliminate the jealous husband. In those episodes, the wooing men abandon their traditional patriarchal supremacy and submit under their ladies for practical reasons; intriguingly, this specific scene evokes a parallel literary tradition of hybrid female creatures associated with wells and lakes (Melusine), hence the hidden matriarchal world.

Perez investigates those bath and bloodletting motifs with the purpose of highlighting also the common hygienic standards in late medieval noble households, especially in twelfth- and thirteenth-century France. This adds a valuable puzzle piece to the overall picture concerning the well-being and medical care in the pre-modern world, at least among the aristocracy, which was subsequently

¹⁰⁴ Research on the bestiaries has grown considerably internationally, as documented by White's extensive investigations; further, see, for instance, *Bestiario medieval*, ed. Ignacio Malaxecheverría (Madrid: Ediciones Siruela, 1993); Debra Hassig, *Medieval Bestiaries: Text, Image, Ideology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Ron Baxter, *Bestiaries and their Users in the Middle Ages* (Stroud, Gloucestershire: Sutton, 1998); *Bestiaire du Moyen Age: les animaux dans les manuscrits: accompagne l'exposition Bestiaire du Moyen Age, coproduite par la Médiathèque de l'Agglomération Troyenne et de la Bibliothèque Nationale de France; exposition présentée à Troyes du 19 juin au 19 septembre 2004*, ed. Marie-Hélène Tesnière (Paris: Somogy, and Troyes: Médiathèque de l'Agglomération Troyenne, 2004); Michel Pastoureau, *Das mittelalterliche Bestiarium*, trans. from the French into German by Birgit Lamerz-Beckschäfer (2011; Darmstadt: Primus Verlag, 2013).

copied by the wealthy members of the urban societies.¹⁰⁵ Public bathhouses became increasingly common in thirteenth-century Paris and many other cities, while the nobility made every effort to enjoy this hygienic luxury in their own houses.¹⁰⁶ This finds vivid expression in the romance *Flamenca*, but also in Marie de France's "Equitain," where the availability of baths makes it possible for the adultery to occur. Perez also refers us to additional evidence confirming this observation, in the poetry by Eustache Deschamps (ca. 1346–ca. 1407), where the public bath matters significantly, similarly as in the works by his contemporaries, such as Oswald von Wolkenstein (1376/77–1445).

In the *lai* "Equitain," bloodletting, hygiene, comfort, pleasure, and adultery all intertwine, which evokes, of course, the subsequent literary tradition of the *fabliaux*, where trickery, deception, dissimulation, etc. also matter greatly. In *Flamenca*, the narrator provides extensive information about the public baths, the tubs used there, and the efforts to keep them all clean. However, while in Marie's text the outcome of the plotting to achieve adultery and to eliminate the husband is the lovers' death, in *Flamenca* we only observe how much the husband is ridiculed while the lovers can enjoy each other. Ironically, however, even though the lovers meet at a place with thermal springs which serve medical, hygienic purposes, they commit adultery and soil themselves in moral and religious terms, which the narrator does not comment on. Nevertheless, as both tales indicate, the cultural framework outlined proves to be one in which personal hygiene and good care of bodily cleanliness mattered greatly – certainly much more than modern myths about the pre-modern world have made us believe, as all the other contributions confirm as well.

In light of all these medical, theological, and philosophical approaches to water, it comes as little surprise that major authors of courtly romances such as Gottfried von Straßburg with his famous *Tristan* (ca. 1210) also embraced the aquatic element as a crucial vehicle to express the esoteric, ineffable experience of love. After all, physical and spiritual health are intimately connected with each other, as we can also observe in this famous romance, where water matters so much for the development of love. Christopher R. Clason examines the catalytic and

¹⁰⁵ See my own contribution to this volume; cf. also the wealth of evidence provided by Alfred Martin, *Deutsches Badewesen* (see note 26).

¹⁰⁶ This is clearly demonstrated in Hans von Waltheim's valuable travelogue and report about the bathing culture in Baden in northeastern Switzerland (1474). See note 87; cf. Albrecht Clasen, "A Slow Paradigm Shift: Late Fifteenth-Century Travel Literature and the Perception of the World: The Case of Hans von Waltheim (ca. 1422–1479)," *Mediaevalia et Humanistica* 42 (2017): 1–21.

communicative function of water in Gottfried's masterpiece (other works by him have not survived) and discovers that the protagonists are constantly exposed to, operate with, and have to fend with the effects and properties of water. Rivers, lakes, the sea, but then also liquids such as wine and love potions can provide new life, but can also threaten the protagonist's existence.¹⁰⁷ Tristan traverses the sea multiple times, and each time the water carries him to new lands where his life takes a decisive turn. The imbibing of liquids, particularly at one specific, critical juncture in the romance – the love potion – can endanger as well as rescue life, create hatred and love, and signal, together with the natural waters, the instability of all human existence. The narrative regularly takes place in maritime environments and embraces water as the essential agent behind all human actions since it determines their performance and possibilities.

Love and death interlock constantly in Gottfried's romance, just as the traversing of bodies of water carries the protagonists from death to life, and vice versa. Moreover, by means of his voyage Tristan is able to demonstrate his musical and linguistic arts, apart from others, at ever new courts, which would allow us to identify water as a conveyor or perhaps even catalyst of art. Further, as Clason alerts us in his analysis, the sea becomes, at times, Tristan's partner and ally, facilitating his most amazing diplomatic operations, through which he can bring love to Cornwall for himself (Isolde) and, concomitantly, envy, jealousy, and hatred to his uncle, King Mark, since the latter cannot partake in the love between his wife and his nephew.

On the other hand, Clason also observes how much water as an environmental medium provides a safe haven and represents a dangerous zone for Tristan, whether we think of the sea or the river, whereas there is no specific reference to a well or spring, that is, unique aquatic locations which matter mostly in other genres, such as in Jean d'Arras's *Mélusine* (1393) or Thüring von Ringoltingen's *Melusine* (1456). Tristan and Isolde operate in a much more maritime environ-

¹⁰⁷ Enigmatically, the German Emperor Charles IV (1346–1378) fell badly ill in October of 1350 and could not recover for almost a year. It might have been a bacterial infection affecting his nervous system, a peripheral neuropathy. Since the etiology was not really possible for his contemporaries, many rumors spread, and the chronicler Matteo Villani (1283–1363) even suggested in his *Nuova Cronica* that Charles might have been poisoned by his wife, Anna of the Palatinate, because she feared that he might have committed adultery. Allegedly, with the help of a love potion she had tried to regain his favor, but when she realized the devastating consequences of that potion on her husband, she confessed and received forgiveness. See Ferdinand Seibt, *Karl IV: Ein Kaiser in Europa* (Munich: Süddeutscher Verlag, 1978), 201–02. Even though this account falls into the realm of historical legend, it still remains significant that individual writers, even chroniclers, could refer to such a love potion as a reality, and this in the late Middle Ages.

ment and are specifically associated with open waters and liquids influencing their lives, including the love potion and blood which Tristan sheds in the blood-letting scene.¹⁰⁸

All fluids speak a symbolic language within the entire *Tristan* tradition and contribute to the further development of the events, revealing truth, triggering events, and transforming those associated with them, as Clason informs us with respect to Thomas of Brittany's conclusion of the romance – missing in Gottfried's version. Ideas and individuals reach new shores, as the sea proves to be the critical medium for the narrative evolution, which also finds a vivid expression in the *lais* by Gottfried's near contemporary Marie de France ("Guigemar," "Milun," "Eliduc," etc.) and in the tradition of the *Partonopeus de Blois* romances (including Konrad von Würzburg's *Partonopier und Meliur*, ca. 1290). However, as Clason also emphasizes, the liquids do not always convey a clear idea and serve only as an opaque mirror that requires a careful reading – such as in the case of the love potion – signifying both life and death within the framework of love.

Jean E. Jost offers a careful analysis of many episodes and scenes in Middle English romances, such as *The Awntyrs off Arthur at the Terne Wathelyne*, *Ywain and Gawain*, and *Sir Tristrem*, where water and oils matter significantly, carrying symbolic, magic, or supernatural meaning, although, as Jost notes, the protagonists in medieval courtly romances are normally not really surprised or shocked about their experience. While the marvelous and prodigious is regularly simply registered and acknowledged as such, if we think of the charming and meaningful *lais* by Marie de France, in *The Awntyrs off Arthur at the Terne Wathelyne* (late fourteenth or early fifteenth century) the opposite is the case, with Gawain and Gaynour clearly noticing the changing of their natural environment and responding with apprehension to the watery landscape around them. Moreover, threat-

108 See the contribution to this volume by Rosa A. Perez. See also the excellent historical overview online at: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bloodletting>; and <http://www.medtech.edu/blog/the-history-progression-and-modern-stance-on-bloodletting> (both last accessed June 9, 2016). The author of this article emphasizes: "It comes as no surprise to modern readers that bloodletting killed far more people than it cured. Still, it wasn't until the 19th century that members of the medical community seriously questioned the merits of this practice. In the 1830s, Pierre Charles Alexandre Louis convincingly argued against the perceived effectiveness of phlebotomy for the treatment of pneumonia and fever." With regard to modern use of bloodletting, we read: "Where ancient bloodletting was used to treat and prevent almost every infirmity imaginable, modern bloodletting (or phlebotomy) is used only to treat specific medical conditions of which medical research has proven the benefits. Research has shown that bloodletting could improve cholesterol, blood pressure and blood glucose levels for people suffering from metabolic syndrome."

ening weather, including hail, sets in and tortures those present. Instead of the pleasant season of May, when Arthurian knights normally enjoy their time at the Round Table, the Middle English romances at this time rather portray the opposite of the natural environment which triggers fear and fright. A water-logged creature warns the protagonists of their own sinful behavior and projects future nefarious scenarios, confirming how much the aqueous element has entered the world of the Middle English romance.¹⁰⁹

In fact, as Jost emphasizes, numerous other representatives contain specific references to watery landscapes, liquids, and oils, such as in *Ywain and Gawain* (early fourteenth century) and *Sir Tristrem* (late thirteenth century), very similar to the continental romances by Chrétien de Troyes and Gottfried von Straßburg.¹¹⁰ Nevertheless, the role of wetlands and marshy lands matters extensively more, almost as a reminder of the world as depicted in the Anglo-Saxon *Beowulf*, where monstrous Grendel houses. In fact, Gawain faces severe dangers and receives near-mortal wounds in battle, but survives for the time being.

Jost also notes the significant symbolism of water and wells, magical liquids and oils in *Ywain and Gawain*, which operates very similarly as do the Old French and the Middle High German versions. Each time, to be sure, aqueous images reflect on the protagonist's need to face a profound challenge and to overcome, ultimately, his own failures and weaknesses in order to triumph on behalf of all courtly values and virtues. Healing and recovery from madness here takes place by means of a magical salve, another liquid, which ultimately might connect this literary tradition with that of the *Melusine* texts, where the protagonist's salvation arrives from the world of wells, hence from the depth of the earth from where the groundwater rises up to the surface, as expressed through the appearance of the fairy figure.

Similarly, and yet on a different level, water and special liquids matter greatly in *Sir Tristrem*, where crossing the water, loss of blood, falling in love through a magical potion, and other topics connect the world of the protagonists with the world of the aqueous. Love, life, and death intertwine in this text and are all predicated in an almost mythical way with water in its various manifestations as the source of all existence. Liquids such as blood incriminate the lovers, and liquids such as the love potion help them to experience the epitome of all human

¹⁰⁹ An interesting parallel might be Heinrich von dem Türlin's *Diu Crône* from the late thirteenth century, where the protagonist also observes numerous miraculous, or rather hellish phenomena and is challenged by rivers. See, for instance, Albrecht Classen, "Self and Other in the Arthurian World: Heinrich von dem Türlin's 'Wunderketten,'" *Monatshefte* 96.1 (2004): 20–39.

¹¹⁰ For the latter, see the contribution to this volume by Christopher R. Clason.

existence, love. Nevertheless, Tristrem dies, as in the French tradition, because, mortally wounded, his beloved arrives too late coming from across the sea to save him, no thanks to his new jealous wife. Justifiably she cannot grasp the mysterious, perhaps almost divine (mystical?) nature of the love between Tristrem and Ysonde, and this in close parallel to the perhaps original version by Thomas of Brittany.¹¹¹

Jost goes so far as to identify water and other liquids as hermeneutic tools, especially in late medieval courtly romances, both on the Continent and in England, although they are more characterized by ambiguity than by straightforward significance. Water can bring life and kill at the same time; love potions carry with them both new life and death simultaneously, if the protagonists in the various romances and other genres do not handle them properly (see also Marie de France's *lai* "Les deus amanz"). Marshy lands and wells constitute the operational stage for fairies and other non-human creatures, who rise out of their natural environment in order to convey prophetic messages to their listeners (see also the anonymous heroic poem, the Middle High German *Nibelungenlied*, ca. 1200). Tragically, however, the heroes do not pay sufficient attention to the words, and experience suffering after all since they cannot control water, and even seem not to know the symbolic relevance of all liquids and aquatic materials; thus they misunderstand or ignore the epistemological statement of the respective water figures speaking to them. In other words, as we can deduce from Jost's article, there is deep truth in water, but most humans can only gain a hunch of insight into what that might mean or entail.¹¹²

In the subsequent papers the perspective widens to larger issues involving the relationship between water globally and the human experience expressed in medieval and Renaissance literature. Anne Scott probes, especially, how water and emotions correspond to and reflect each other in narrative and poetic terms. The basic values of humanity cannot be realized, as she argues very much in line with previous research, if the individual does not acknowledge his/her emotional

¹¹¹ For an attempt to connect the *Tristan* tradition with medieval mysticism, see now Albrecht Classen, "Religious Utopia in Gottfried von Strassburg's *Tristan*: Was Gottfried Influenced by Mystics such as Hildegard von Bingen?," *Amsterdam Beiträge zur älteren Germanistik* 68 (2011): 143–67.

¹¹² *Water & Heritage: Material, Conceptual and Spiritual Connections*, ed. Willem J. H. Willems and Henk P. J. van Schalk (Leiden: Sidestone Press, 2015). See also the impressive study by John M. Hill, *The Cultural World in Beowulf Toronto*. Anthropological Horizons, 6 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), esp. 77–78, where he discusses the debate between Beowulf and Unferth regarding the former's earlier swimming contest in his youth.

status and does not correlate this with the external, social world, which then allows for a certain degree of rationalization and closure.

Beginning with the Anglo-Saxon *Beowulf* and the hero's fight against the dragon, Scott highlights the role which fear might play in the struggle for survival in that mortal battle, which is indirectly associated with marshy, watery lands, just as in the case of Grendel who resides in such planes. The poet obviously drew on archetypal experiences and sentiments insofar as swamps and moors have always represented uncanny territories, being neither firm land nor the open sea, defying human needs to deal with clear categories also in their interaction with the natural environment. The world of Grendel cannot be identified in clearly moral terms, which makes *Beowulf*'s battle against this monster such a significant struggle for humanity to determine its own understanding of good versus evil. In that context we must observe that *Beowulf* came from across the open sea, while Grendel resides in an aqueous, murky, and indeterminable "mere." He also dives into the sea to fight Grendel's mother and returns from the bottom of the sea triumphantly, bringing with him, out of the water, mankind's victory over evil.

Other Old English poems such as "The Seafarer" project the open waters as the terrain where the individual protagonist has to struggle for his physical and spiritual survival and act out the determination of his individual honor. This experience is paralleled by various episodes in *Beowulf*, and then numerous times in Icelandic sagas, such as *Njál's Saga* and especially in the fourteenth-century *Grettir's Saga* where the protagonist abodes on an island well isolated from the rest of post-conversion Iceland where he can no longer exist with his set of heroic values characteristic of a pre-Christian world that insists on specific moral and ethical ideals that clash with those embraced by Grettir. However, Grettir also faces the challenge of moral incertitude represented by a figure such as Glaum, which forces him to travel from the island to the mainland, a symbolic move often carried out in medieval and early modern literature.¹¹³ Traversing the body of ice-cold water reveals his human nature with its own weakness, and reflects his ultimately failed efforts to re-integrate into society because he is a liminal character, similar to Hagen in the *Nibelungenlied* (ca. 1200). The latter also faces an existential challenge, that is, a body of water, the river Danube, and then ferries all by

¹¹³ Albrecht Classen, "Caught on an Island: Geographic and Spiritual Isolation in Medieval German Courtly Literature: *Herzog Ernst, Gregorius, Tristan, and Partonopier und Meliur*," *Studia Neophilologica* 79 (2007): 69–80; see also the contributions to *Between the Islands – And the Continent: Papers on Hiberno-Scandinavian-Continental Relations in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Rudolf Simek and Asya Ivanova. *Studia medievalia septentrionalia*, 21 (Vienna: Fassbaender, 2013); and to *Maritime Mittelalter: Meere als Kommunikationsräume*, ed. Michael Borgolte and Nikolas Jaspert (Ostfildern: Jan Thorbecke Verlag, [2016]).

himself the entire army across to the other side; hence they will march into their own death in the land of King Etzel, ruler over the Huns, married to Kriemhild, King Gunther's sister, hence one of their own.

Scott then turns to the *Cloud of Unknowing* (late fourteenth century) where the mystical experience of God is made possible through an epiphany that happens once the individual has penetrated the cloud, another manifestation, though highly vaporous, of water.¹¹⁴ Only by losing all physical sensation, the mystic's soul is prepared for the arrival of the Godhead in an aquatic context. From here Scott leaps to some of the sonnets by Shakespeare in order to explore the nature of love within the context of water, reflecting the tempestuous nature of these erotic feelings within the individual. Love tosses him/her back and forth and exposes the lack of stability in human life, which the poet John Donne confirmed as well, and which might well be a universal observation in much of world love poetry.

Similarly, medieval literature in general, such as Geoffrey Chaucer's *Man of Law's Tale* (in his *Canterbury Tales*, ca. 1400) confirms this transitory, ephemeral nature of all life, best expressed through the image of the sea voyage. Scott also discusses this phenomenon in light of *The Franklin's Tale*, to which we could add Gottfried von Straßburg's *Tristan* (ca. 1210) or Boccaccio's *Decameron* (ca. 1350), where many protagonists have to traverse the sea and thus experience the ever rising ebb and flow of life in its happiness and tragedy.

Scott also refers to Chrétien de Troyes's *Yvain* (ca. 1160) with its central motif of the well where the sprinkling of water brings about the challenge for the protagonists and thus builds a rich web of literary references all based on the motif of water that reflects uncannily the dialectics of all human existence. As Chrétien suggests, knightly adventures just for their own sake, that is, purely masculine acts of heroism, ultimately fail because they lack their social significance, as the confrontation with water subtly but deftly signals. Little wonder then that Scott also includes a discussion of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (late fourteenth century) where the changing of seasons and the arrival of winter with its snow and cold confirm the impact of water on the individual in his/her existential quest.

¹¹⁴ See also the contribution to this volume by Debra L. Stoudt. It remains a desideratum for future research to investigate at greater length the epistemological relationship between mysticism and water, that is, the significance of the symbol of religious fluidity. In my forthcoming book, *Water in Medieval Literature* (Lexington Books), I have dedicated an entire chapter to the topic of water/fluidity/liquidity in its relationship to the mystical experience in the work of Mechthild von Magdeburg's *The Flowing Light of the Godhead*.

Scott concludes her analysis by turning to Act 3 of Shakespeare's *King Lear*, where water, now in the form of tears, consumes the king, suffering from his personal tragedy. This then leads over to his withdrawal to the wet and cold heath, that is, the watery world in the physical environment mirroring the king's internal condition. Whereas the English mystic Margery Kempe (early fifteenth century) achieved her goal of establishing a spiritual union with the Godhead mostly by way of her excessive crying both in private and in public,¹¹⁵ Shakespeare projects a king who is out of self-control and subject to his emotions.¹¹⁶ By contrast, as Scott emphasizes, in the thirteenth-century *Merlin* by Robert de Boron, the king understands and tries to control his emotions, which are nevertheless reflected in the turmoil of water, since the protagonist acts with an evil spirit and is deeply determined by his hubris and greed.

As Scott suggests, the element of water proves to be a highly volatile, flexible, fluid medium through which human suffering is powerfully reflected and dealt with, especially in medieval and early modern literature. The natural environment mirrors internal conflicts, flaws, and weaknesses in people, as authors throughout time have richly demonstrated; see also the comments above in this introduction. In this regard, it might be appropriate here to undergird the central message outlined by Scott indirectly supported by ecocritical thinking, leading to a new insight of how human life and the natural world are intimately intertwined with each other, as mirrored in the many different literary texts composed in various genres.

After all, we as humans are born when the mother's water breaks, and we subsequently swim, metaphorically speaking, through this life, either crossing bodies of water or shedding tears. In other words, we are constantly swimming in an ever changing sea of large and small waves and need to struggle hard in order to avoid drowning. At times even, mystically inspired individuals in the Middle Ages reported that they traversed watery clouds to reach God or reflected on our own moral, ethical, and spiritual values as mirrored in the waters of this world. Heroic figures often have to cross rivers or oceans to meet their destiny, while romance protagonists have to cope with mysterious wells and fountains where they encounter otherworld creatures who transform their human existence when they marry them.

¹¹⁵ See now the contributions to *Crying in the Middle Ages: Tears of History*, ed. Elina Gertsman. Routledge Studies in Medieval Religion and Culture (New York and London: Routledge, 2012).

¹¹⁶ For medieval literary examples of crying kings, see Albrecht Classen, "The Cry-Baby Kings in Courtly Romances: What is Wrong with Medieval Kingship?", *Studi Medievali 3a Serie*, XXXIX.2 (1998), 833–63.

While water is the essential medium to clean oneself and is hence discussed many times in a wide variety of discourses, the opposite, filth, can also be found numerous times in medieval and early modern literature, as Fabian Alfie concludes in his examination of an obscure, heretofore un-edited Italian poem, “Sonetus de senectute ductas.” This poem pursues the traditional motif of lambasting old and ugly women as filthy due to the effluence of malodorous fluids from their bodies, which served the poets to ridicule old age altogether and to associate it with the negative side of water, which is now emitted from the body in its soiled condition.¹¹⁷

It would be absurd to assume that the purpose truly consisted of attacking all old women and to debase them as utterly filthy. Instead, as Alfie alerts us, here we are dealing with a literary *topos* which had been introduced to Italy by Rustico Filippi (ca. 1230–ca. 1299) and Guido Guinizzelli (ca. 1230–1276). Analyzing the anonymous, heretofore ignored sonnet, Alfie identifies the extent to which filth and pollution were combined according to this poetic register, which also aimed at warning the audience of uncontrolled sexuality, especially by old people, who thus threatened the well-being of late medieval, mostly urban society. For the poet old, still sexually active, yet filthy women were on the level of animals and thus had to be repressed with all possible might.

But again, this harsh language was not the outgrowth of a personal vendetta, but part of a larger poetic discourse, as we learn from another Udine poem, “Veder ti possa vechia scarpelata.” The value of these rather minor poems consists in their common strategy to copy and to re-elaborate previous texts, such as Boccaccio’s story seven on the eighth day in his *Decameron* (ca. 1350), providing an intriguing mirror of more popular culture at that time. Although there the female protagonist is a young widow, her moral depravity is equally punished by her former lover, a young scholar, through a clever trick which makes her suffer badly in physical terms. On that basis, Alfie argues that these sonnets reflect common assumptions in late medieval Italy about the negative connotations of bodily filth and effluents.

We ought to differentiate hence between dirt, a material detritus, and filth, a moral element that needs to be eliminated for the well-being of society at large. The old woman’s effluents represent thus a warning against the dangers of illicit and inappropriate sexuality, especially with an old, non-reproductive woman.

¹¹⁷ The Middle High German poet Der Stricker (fl. ca. 1220–1250) treated this topic already in his verse narrative “Von übeln wiben”; see Wolfgang W. Moelleken, “Der Stricker: Von übeln wiben”. *Europäische Hochschulschriften. Reihe I: Deutsche Literatur und Germanistik*, 25 (Bern: Verlag Herbert Lang, 1970).

In this regard, the poetic discussion of filth addressed, as Alfie underscores, the notion of ‘clean living,’ or simply moral hygiene, expressed in images of bodily fluids.

Filth as a pejorative term in a literary context is one thing, but how did people in the pre-modern world view it in concrete, material terms, and how did they try to come to terms with it? There is no doubt that true filth is toxic, and all urine, feces, and other detritus have to be removed as best as possible to guarantee a healthy life style for society at large, and this also, of course, in the pre-modern world. This requires practical agreements, communal efforts, monetary investments, and legal measures, especially once society has grown more intensively, with ever new individuals and social groups competing with each other over property rights, living conditions, political and economic rights, etc., and this especially since the high and late Middle Ages.

In his contribution Scott L. Taylor investigates the question how English and other European cities handled the entire complex of waste water, garbage, and detritus since the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Various professions easily collided with each other, as when fishermen, for instance, complained about the fouling of the river by the butchers and tanners. Virtually all cities in England and on the Continent banned the dumping of human waste from the upper floors onto the streets at least since around 1300, but the many different ordinances had only limited effects, as complaints about terribly dirty city streets in the subsequent centuries confirm on a regular basis. Waste is simply a problem for everyone, difficult to get rid of, especially within larger communities. The numerous legal efforts confirm that already pre-modern society was quite aware about and concerned with the dangers of waste for human health, but the issue could not be taken care of easily, and it continues to plague us even until today in many parts of our world, despite our huge progress in sanitation and the establishments of modern sewer systems.

However, as Taylor recognizes, already under the English King Henry II (1154–1189) we can observe the development of the assize of nuisance, which provided the urban authorities with more teeth in combating ‘illegal’ depositing of human waste in public spaces, perhaps more even than on the continent, especially because the new laws emphasized causality over fault and damage. The legal concept underscored also the individual’s privilege of preserving one’s health in a narrow environment, which was hence directed specifically against all those professions that caused dirt, pollution, bad odor, and noise.

Taylor uncovers numerous cases in which the complainant raised an issue regarding unhealthy, filthy conditions that impacted his or her life. Despite many limitations, indeed, late medieval and early modern cities made serious efforts

to take care of the sewage problem, at least on a person to person basis, and perhaps not quite yet on a universal level. In other words, the global aspect of hygiene was already then intimately intertwined with legal and social conditions and discussed both publicly and privately. Both the older Roman Law and the newer English Common Law were concerned, each in its own way, with the interaction between the individual and his/her neighbor and the larger social community, and this also with regard to hygiene, waste products, and detritus in general terms. It does not come as a surprise that actually effective and large-scale solutions, such as an urban sewage system, emerged only in the modern era, but the issues were discussed already hundreds of years before our time.

However, as Taylor suggests, English Common Law offered significant and constructive opportunities to pursue legal measures against pollution on the basis of the concept of nuisance, which was relatively subjective and yet by the same token rather effective in handling complaints about a neighbor's pollution or generally lacking hygienic conditions. Legal history thus proves to be a valuable source of information also about the history of dirt, health, living conditions, and human interactions on the very ordinary material level.

In order to comprehend the actual situation on the ground, we can also turn to the cities in Bohemia during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, which David Tomíček discusses in his contribution (see below). Even though the city administrators all over Europe, along with their colleagues on higher levels, thus regularly supported by the respective lawyers, struggled hard to come to terms with human waste within their urban communities, both financial and technical hurdles were hard to overcome.

Nevertheless, the countless complaints about dirt, detritus, feces, etc. in the early modern cities should not be overrated since people always tend to make much more noise about daily nuisances than about actual arrangements and constructive solutions. Today we are more often than not simply victims of overdramatized comments from the past and take those too easily at face value, especially because it is so convenient to laugh about the assumed 'primitive' world of the past, which must have been, of course, much 'dirtier' than we are today.

Fortunately for our collective effort, this volume also includes several studies on practical medical, hygienic, and nutritional aspects correlated to water. After all, pre-modern people were not ignorant or stupid and knew very well how to handle their own lives, even though we tend to point out numerous seemingly absurd superstitions practiced in medical treatments. This also involved personal health care, as Sarah Gordon emphasizes in her study by analyzing the role of water for many different health concerns as discussed in five fifteenth-century medical recipe books: Huntington Library in San Marino, California: HM 58, 64,

1336, and 19079, and in another fifteenth-century edited *Leechbook* (Medical Society of London MS 136).

Probably very contrary to modern concepts about pre-modern health care, the anonymous authors prove to be highly interested in water for preventative care, since many of the recipes involve baths, drinking herbal water, and the use of water for specific medical applications. Both the original authors and later scribes jotted down personal, practical experiences for many different kinds of illnesses, offering their own treatment plans and recommendations, often based on water.

The authors consistently suggest a high level of hygiene and cleanliness, regular use of the bath, drinking of wine, and a careful observation of one's diet, especially in order to maintain the balance of the four humors in the tradition of Galen. There are countless suggestions to place specific plant matter such as herbs and bark into to fresh water, which could thus be regarded as the beginning of early modern (integrative) medicine and pharmacy. After all, the water had to be clean and fresh if it was to have the desired medical effect together with the ingredients, as the fifteenth-century medical professionals only knew too well and strongly suggested to their colleagues. As Gordon observes, these medical recipe books and the *Leechbook* specified various types of water (hot, cold, mineral, etc.) for specific health care needs, and could thus be identified as the earliest balneological treatises. Contrary to modern assumptions, late medieval medical advice heavily emphasized the use of baths for hygienic and especially restorative purposes (including digestive and pain relief remedies).

Undoubtedly, as Gordon notices, the authors of those health regimens at time also aimed at rather dubious healing effects, concerning sexual lust or the very absence of libido by means of water treatment, trying to influence their patients' behavior in moral-religious terms. Unclean water and unclean food, for instance, were identified as a potential source for catalepsy and melancholy, and the medical doctor was thus encouraged to apply a particular water therapy for his patients. All five medical treatises promote preventative medicine, practical health care, and the deliberate and intelligent use of water in food and in bodily applications for medical therapy.

This does not tell us anything about the common hygienic practices by the ordinary people, but it certainly underscores the high degree of awareness among the medical experts about the great importance of water both for personal hygiene and for medical treatments. Modern-day balneologists and defenders of alternative and integrative medicine would certainly recognize major forerunners in the anonymous authors of those five medical regimens.

Subsequently, David Tomíček examines similar aspects in light of regimens of health, that is, medical treatises composed in late medieval and early modern Bohemia. Health can be mostly maintained if the individual imbibes the right amounts of good liquids and consumes the proper nutrition. Tomíček here focuses at first on the role of water as commented on by the various medical authorities, such as Johann Kopp von Raumenthal (1487–1558), who did not reject it altogether, but favored wine, if drunk in moderate amounts. Water might easily contain impurities and could be dangerous for one's health, especially if taken from uncertain or definitely dirty sources. Beer enjoyed a high reputation both for its nutritional value and its hygienic properties, but it was mostly drunk by the rural population, while those living in cities and the members of the aristocracy preferred wine, which was also enjoyed as a status symbol, as, for instance, Johann Butzbach (1477–1516) reported. However, Johann Amos Comenius (1592–1670) warned against wine and recommended, instead, beer – even for children – and water.

Other topics discussed by the various medical authorities were questions regarding taking baths in cold and hot water, washing one's hair, washing hands after a meal, cleaning the face, or the usefulness and health effectiveness of frequenting public baths.¹¹⁸ Some of the recommendations pertained to the proper time when to take a bath and under what circumstances. Frequenting spas apparently became fashionable in the late Middle Ages and the early modern age, as both narrative accounts, historical records, and personal letters, among other text genres confirm,¹¹⁹ yet medical authorities such as Wenceslas Payer (ca. 1488–1537) warned against the excessive observation of health regimens, such as heavy overdrinking of mineral waters. Thomas Mitis (1523–1591), very similar to previous critics and satirists such as Poggio Bracciolini (1380–1459), lamented the fact that many people attended those spas simply out of prurient interests or because

118 See also the contributions to this volume by Albrecht Classen and Thomas G. Benedek.

119 See, for instance, the brief but significant comment by the most prolific letter writer in the seventeenth century, Elisabeth, Duchess of Orléans, the famous Liselotte of the Palatinate (1652–1722). In a letter to Lady Court Marshall Anna Katharina of Harling from July 28, 1696, she writes: "sawer brunen seindt nicht indifferent. Sie thun entweder gar viel guts oder schaden sehr" (Mineral spas are not all the same. Some might do us good, or they could hurt us much). *Liselotte von der Pfalz in ihren Harling-Briefen*, ed. Hannelore Helfer. Part 1. Veröffentlichungen der Pfälzischen Gesellschaft zur Förderung der Wissenschaften, 102 (Hanover: Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 2007), no. 132, p. 252. For Elisabeth as a correspondent, see Albrecht Classen, "Elisabeth Charlotte von der Pfalz, Herzogin von Orléans. Epistolare Selbstbekenntnisse und literarisches Riesenunternehmen," *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 77.1 (1995): 33–54.

they were, as we would say today, ‘sex tourists.’¹²⁰ Other criticism pertained to the actually unhealthy and shabby conditions of those locations.

Tomiček also discusses numerous reports about famous wells the water of which promised health for religious reasons, which led to extensive pilgrimages and the sale of bottles filled with that water. He also notes how much some of the medical authors reflected on the need for clean drinking water and thus revealed a certain environmental consciousness to maintain hygienic conditions. Remarkably for us today, those early modern sources indicated how much dirty water from swamps, rivers, ponds, or lakes was regarded already then as dangerous for human health. It would actually be absurd to think that people even in much earlier times would have disregarded this aspect; we just don’t have all the desired sources available. Consequently, in the late Middle Ages and early modern age there was a lot of discussion also about fresh and healthy air, which was produced by the extensive Bohemian forests. In fact, here we can identify medical experts arguing as early environmentalists and health-care professionals interested in natural conditions that would be favorable for a healthy life style. Pavel Žídek (1413–1471), for instance, clearly outlined building designs that would have allowed good ventilation, and he pushed for strict measures to clean up city streets and public places.¹²¹

Apparently, all that criticism indicated truly bad conditions on the ground, and it probably took hundreds of years well into the late nineteenth century until modern canalization and an efficient sewer system changed all that considerably.¹²² Nevertheless, the fact by itself that contemporary authors lamented those bad conditions indicates that they were fully aware about the implied dangers for general hygiene and hence physical well-being. The lack of financial and technical means, for instance, to take care of waste and waste water within a city did not

120 See the contribution by Albrecht Classen to this volume; cf. also the contribution to *Sexuality in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times: New Approaches to a Fundamental Cultural-Historical and Literary-Anthropological Theme*, ed. Albrecht Classen. Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture, 3 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2008); see also my study *Sex im Mittelalter* (see note 83).

121 See also the contribution to this volume by Scott L. Taylor. There are scores of related studies dealing with the dirty living conditions in early modern cities.

122 See, for instance, the contributions to *Mensch und Umwelt im Mittelalter*, ed. Bernd Herrmann (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1986); and to *Wasser unter der Stadt: Bäche, Kanäle, Kläranlagen. Stadthygiene in Weimar vom Mittelalter bis zum 20. Jahrhundert* (Weimar: Abwasserbetrieb, 2012); cf. also Paweł Cembrzynski, *Zaopatrzenie w wodę i usuwanie nieczystości w miastach stref bałtyckiej i sudecko-karpckiej w XIII – XVI wieku* (Water Supply and Waste Disposal in Cities of the Baltic and Sudeten-Carpatians Zones in the 13th–16th Centuries) (Wrocław: Uniwersytet Wrocławski. Instytut Archeologii, 2011).

mean that the people would not have noticed those problems. There was much dirt, of course, but this does not allow us to conclude that the pre-modern world was simply dirty and baked in filth, as modern myths like to suggest.

Significantly, as Tomiček alerts us altogether, the medical, hygienic, naturalist, and environmental discussion regarding healthy living conditions and the availability of clean and good water, hence also the reflections on the advantages of wine and beer over possibly polluted water, began already in the Middle Ages and has continued until today and was of particular importance among the Bohemian (and other European) medical doctors since the fifteenth century. It would be intriguing to investigate what earlier regimens of health – such as the *Regimen sanitatis Salernitatum* (The Salernitan Rule of Health; twelfth or thirteenth century) – would have to say about those issues, which have been addressed to some extent already by other experts on these topics already in other venues.¹²³

We can thus realize already how much we will have to remove ourselves from many mythical concepts about the Middle Ages in our quest for a more critical understanding of that world, especially when we focus on medicine, health-care, personal hygiene, and well-being.

Of course, considering our own conditions today, we have observed tremendous improvements in all those areas over the last hundred years and more, but this does not entail automatically that people in the past were lacking basic hygiene and did not care about the best possible treatment of feces and other form of dirt. In my own contribution I examine specifically what medieval German poets and some of their contemporaries had to say about baths in general and in specific narrative contexts. Even though these sources are literary in nature, and even though they mostly mirror the lifestyle of the upper social classes at court, they consistently reflect a surprisingly high level of hygiene already in the twelfth century and beyond.¹²⁴

The earlier sources are mostly mute regarding such personal matters, which simply does not allow us to draw any specific conclusions about cleanliness, medical treatments, baths, and similar aspects at that time. Heroic poetry, for instance, does not grant any room for questions regarding digestion, urination,

¹²³ Noga Arikha, *Passions and Tempers: A History of the Humours* (New York: Ecco, 2007). For a very current and entertaining response to this famous *Regimen* in an attempt to apply its recommendations to a modern life, see the online article by Sarah Laskow, June 16, 2016: <http://www.atlasobscura.com/articles/i-tried-a-medieval-diet-and-i-didnt-even-get-that-drunk> (last accessed on June 20, 2016).

¹²⁴ See also the wide-ranging contribution to this volume by Anne Scott. She does not, however, address German literary texts.

defecation, etc. It would be absurd, for instance, to expect to learn about Siegfried in the *Nibelungenlied* or Rodrigo Diaz, el Cid, in the *Poema de Mío Cid* using the toilet. The motif of King Arthur spending time in the privy would be a topic for modern movies or novels poking fun at the Middle Ages, but it would never emerge in the historical texts because of its complete banality.

By contrast, as I try to bring to light in my discussion, there is an abundance of references to a high level of personal hygiene in courtly romances, where the protagonists regularly receive the best possible treatment when they arrive at new courts/castles, when they travel to far-away lands, after they have accomplished a major feat in fighting, and when it is simply appropriate to take a bath as part of the regular aristocratic life style.

In the late Middle Ages, both didactic and satirical writers increasingly picked up the topic of bathing and utilized it for laughing at their society or for teaching them a particular lesson, whether we think of Der Stricker, Heinrich Kaufringer, or the anonymous author *Till Eulenspiegel*. The Humanist Erasmus of Rotterdam complained bitterly about the decline of bathing culture, which might have been closely correlated with the massive spread of syphilis and other epidemic diseases at that time period. Fifteenth-century artists went along with their contemporary poets and began depicting extensive bath scenes where members of the aristocracy enjoyed leisure time with each other. The reference to the spa in the Pyrenees in Marguerite de Navarre's *Heptaméron* (1558/1559) within the narrative framework confirms how much a visit to such health centers had become a standard practice for early modern aristocracy.

Negative examples regarding personal hygiene in the Middle Ages, such as the anonymous verse narrative *Mauritius von Crâun* (ca. 1220/1250) do not detract from the overall observation that pre-modern literature is filled with references to spas and private baths (Heinrich Kaufringer). Little wonder then that late medieval literature is populated with references to water fairies or nymphs, such as the famous Melusine, who is, like her two sisters, closely associated with the well in the forest.

To confirm the significance of baths for public culture in the late Middle Ages, I also refer to the humanist Poggio Bracciolini (1380–1459) and the German travelogue author Hans von Waltheim (ca. 1422–1479), who both provided detailed information about the spa town of Baden in northwestern Switzerland near Bad Ragatz. Neither one even raises any question regarding the importance of baths; those are simply identified as standard features of everyday life.¹²⁵ The very

¹²⁵ See also the discussion of both texts by Thomas G. Benedek in his contribution to this volume.

absence of particular remarks in their accounts, however, signals the true level of acceptance of spas that, like private or public baths, were perhaps already a standard feature of late medieval life.

The world of the sixteenth century did certainly not experience a general decline in medicine and health care, and also not in personal hygiene, but public baths were suddenly shunned out of fear of infection, while private baths gained in popularity. Perhaps this might be the reason why early modern literature is much less filled with references to baths and spas. The poetic texts discussed here do not necessarily provide solid and far-reaching material evidence as to the global topic pursued in this volume, but they certainly indicate what specific cultural practices were commonly realized. We find, in fact, many references to medical doctors, personal hygiene, and a wide-spread bathing culture. The notion of the 'dark Middle Ages' thus proves to be rather absurd and misleading, especially in light of the literary and art-historical evidence. This also applies, naturally, to later centuries, but much depends on the relevant sources that might inform us about the relevant discourse regarding health and medicine.

Let us briefly take a look at the subsequent period. In the early eighteenth century, for instance, famous Elisabeth of the Palatinate, the Duchess of Orléans, made hundreds of comments on her own health and that of her correspondents, mentioning numerous types of illnesses, wounds, accidents, pregnancies, gynaecological issues, etc. In a letter from May 19, 1718, for instance, she comments: "mein neveu hatt hir ader gelaßen undt purgirt. Ist nun wider woll; Daß so gar unbeständige wetter verursachet viel husten undt schnupfen über all, undt man hört all allen orten eben so sehr husten alß im winter undt herbst; Man pretendirt doch – daß es gesundt solle sein – wen mans überstanden hatt"¹²⁶ (my nephew let some blood and received a laxative. Now he is well again. The constantly changing weather causes much coughing and sneezing everywhere, and one hears as much coughing at all ends just as in winter and fall. People pretend that this is supposed to be healthy, once they have overcome the sickness).

Of course, Elisabeth was not medically trained and only talked about everyday illnesses and medical problems affecting herself and her friends and relatives. In a letter to the Elect Duchess Sophie of Hanover from March 27, 1677, she

¹²⁶ *Liselotte von der Pfalz in ihren Harling-Briefen* (see note 119), No. 725, p. 445. For a biography, see now Christian Bouyer, *La princesse Palatine: belle-soeur de Louis XIV* (Paris: Pygmalion, 2006). See also the useful collection of anecdotes drawn from her letters, *Anekdoten vom französischen Hofe, vorzüglich aus den Zeiten Ludwigs XIV. und des Duc Regent, welchen noch ein Versuch über die Masque de Fer beigefügt ist*, ed. Maria Moog-Grünwald (1789; Hildesheim, Zürich, and New York: Olms, 2006).

also refers to the Swiss spa of Baden, hoping that one of her relatives would be able to profit from the mineral waters there.¹²⁷ But these letters confirm, particularly through their private nature, how much the discourse on health, cleanliness, and well-being influenced also early modern society. Elisabeth, for instance, was very critical about excessive bloodletting and in a letter from October 20, 1719, she charged the medical doctor Fagon for having killed the king through extreme and relentless treatments, when he probably simply needed rest and medical care.¹²⁸

However, Elisabeth's letters make up only a small window into the large topic of early modern hygiene and medicine, especially because they represent only impressionistic writing. Modern research still has to uncover countless archives and probe the true discourse on those personal issues, including sickness, the use of the toilet, bathing, medicine, and typical problems of getting old.¹²⁹

In order to shed particular light on the medical profession in the early modern age, Chiara Benati examines Hans von Gersdorff's High German *Feldtbuch der Wundarzney*, an "Arzneibuch" (1517; Medical Commonplace Book), in its Low German translation, *Dat Velt bock*, which appeared some time later in a Copenhagen manuscript (Kongelige Bibliotek, GKS 1663 4^{to}). This translation powerfully signals the considerable popularity of this practical handbook even in the far north and the general interest in such medical treatises at large. Benati is primarily interested in analyzing the sources and additions to the Low German version, which reflects the author's medical learning and highly practical experience in his everyday-life practice, though not necessarily in the battle field where immediate attention to wounds and injuries was most critical. In other words, such a professional had to be an expert both in medical treatments and in surgery. For instance, the reader was supposed to get precise information about how to carry out surgeries and how to treat cancer.

Curiously, however, as Benati notes, highly learned and yet also very practical medical, therapeutic, and surgical advice is easily combined with folklore prescriptions, such as the use of cats to prepare various types of remedies. A big topic,

¹²⁷ Aus den Briefen der Herzogin Elisabeth Charlotte von Orléans an die Kurfürstin Sophie von Hannover: Ein Beitrag zur Kulturgeschichte des 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts, ed. Eduard Bodemann, vol. 1 (Hanover: Hahn'sche Buchhandlung, 1891; rpt. Hanover: Georg Olms, 2003), 16.

¹²⁸ Anekdoten vom Französischen Hofe (see note 126), 108.

¹²⁹ For some preliminary observations, which, however, never go much into detail, see Madeleine Foisil, "Die Sprache der Dokumente und die Wahrnehmung des privaten Lebens," *Geschichte des privaten Lebens*, ed. Philippe Ariès and Roger Chartier, vol. 3, trans. into German by Holger Fliessbach and Gabriele Krüger-Wirrer (1986; Frankfurt a. M.: S. Fischer Verlag, 1991), 333–69.

typical of military medicine, represented staunching bleeding, which many other medical authors also addressed in their own works. However, quite similar as in the high Middle Ages, the medical treatment was also combined with prayers and charms, which remind us even of the Old English and Old High German charms. After all, even those early modern medical authorities knew of their own limitations and looked for alternative procedures and strategies, appealing to magical powers and, of course, God by way of prayers.

The Low German treatise also includes recommendations regarding ophthalmological conditions, and outlines specific methods to deal with cancer, nose bleeding, syphilis, indigestion, and so forth, addressing a wide range of medical situations. As Benati points out, in the *Velt bock* there are also comments on how to handle the problem when the foot is in danger of falling off as a result of extreme frost, or when feet are smelly or the patient suffered from bad breath.

In other words, as Benati concludes, the compiler of the Low German translation added to the traditional surgery manual numerous recommendations and prescriptions for a wide variety of physical-medical needs, conditions, wounds, smells, and discomforts. By contrast, amputations are not even discussed, as if the compiler did not see any necessity to discuss such surgical operations, whereas everyday medical issues mattered to him considerably more. Personal hygiene and personal well-being hence assumed an extensive significance already at that time, which further undermines commonly held modern notions about an allegedly 'dirty Middle Ages' or 'dirty early modern age.' Irrespective of the actual success rate of medical doctors to take care of their patients, here we observe another example of the intensive discourse on medical health care already prior to the modern world.

Since antiquity and beyond, water in baths and spas has been recognized as having a healthy effect on people, but their particular value and the specific properties of the water at individual sites were discussed more intensively only by the thirteenth century, as Thomas G. Benedek illustrates in his contribution.¹³⁰ Pietro d'Abano (ca. 1250–1315/16) was one of the first to investigate critically the quality of spas and their waters, and soon after the discourse extended well beyond the Alps, as most impressively documented in the numerous writings by Theophrastus Paracelsus (1493–1541), who sometimes referred exclusively to the workings of God to bring about healing, and sometimes emphasized the natural etiology of the thermal and mineral waters. As to be expected in his case, he continued to draw strongly from Galenic thinking, and yet also relied heavily on his own exper-

¹³⁰ Fürbeth, *Heilquellen in der deutschen Wissensliteratur* (see note 68).

imental analysis. Contemporary medical experts such as Walter Ryff (ca. 1550–ca. 1560) and Georgius Agricola (1494–1555) offered detailed and complex opinions about the usefulness and health effects of spas and of water in particular. Intriguingly, even poets and German *Meistersinger* such as Hans Folz (ca. 1440–1513) and Hans Sachs (1494–1576) included rich information about these medical issues pertaining to spas in their poetry. Most impressively, the Straßburg humanist Thomas Murner (ca. 1475–1537) even composed an allegorical poem, his *Geistliche Badenfahrt*, and other authors also commented on the growing popularity and significance of spas.

This general and public interest in thermal or mineral baths also led to pre-scientific experimentation and analysis of water, such as by Georgius Agricola (1494–1555) and Caspar Schober (ca. 1530). Those authors then also turned their attention to bodily features relevant for cleanliness, such as pores, through which heat and cold are moving. Benedek examines the various components of the body determined by temperatures as viewed by the sixteenth-century physicians, and combines their comments on specific details with their remarks on the property of water, being so relevant for the overall well-being. In particular, he focuses on the various recommendations regarding bathing and spas, such as those by Paracelsus, and here reveals some of the contradictions in his work, once relying strongly on the Galenic theory of humors, and once primarily on the workings of God. Nevertheless, Paracelsus analyzed the water in the thermal spa of Pfäfers in northeastern Switzerland according to the Galenic concept of intrinsic qualities. The fact that the spa has two sources of water affords an opportunity for Paracelsus to “prove” the correctness of his theory that existence results from the separation of potential inert substances. Since water intrinsically is cold its “separation” results in one source that contains more coldness, and the hot spring that has a deficiency of coldness. That is why the temperature of the spa is moderate. Superimposed on his pseudo-scientific explanations, he claimed that the influence of God and the stars impacts the life of each individual. Admittedly that made no sense to many of his contemporaries and no one soon thereafter.

With respect to hygiene, medicine, and well-being we can truly observe the way how the paradigm shift from the Middle Ages to the modern world took place. After all, the ongoing discussion pertained to the mineral content of water, the levels of heat, the water’s possible toxicity, the patient’s preparedness before taking the bath and the actions taken after the bath, and then also religious and Galenic concepts. Other important voices considered by Benedek are those by the Germans Georgius Agricola and Walther Hermannus Ryff, and the English William Turner, John Jones, Thomas Venner, and others.

Part of the medical discourse, often complemented by the literary documents, also pertained to the question why and when a public bath was not to be

used, and the opinions truly differed remarkably throughout the entire sixteenth century and beyond, especially in light of the new danger of syphilis since the late fifteenth century. Dietetics also mattered significantly and were discussed in a rather controversial manner. Interestingly, many of the medical authors also strongly recommended exercise, while they hardly ever ignored to refer to God as the highest authority, and as the one who alone could restore one's health, after all.

Benedek also introduces the regimen by the German doctors Christoph Wirsung (1500–1571) and Christian W. Hufeland (1762–1836), who continued with the same tradition, and yet contributed to an ever widening, refining, and transforming medical discourse on how thermal and mineral baths, dietetics, and other aspects could contribute to the establishment of the efforts of regaining one's health. We can thus conclude that cultural history is deeply determined by such issues as medicine and physical therapy, eating habits and ordinary life performances.

One more time, to repeat the same fundamental point, throughout the ages water, above all, has always mattered critically for every human society, and the approach to water, its treatment and use, have regularly served as critical benchmarks of cultural history at large.¹³¹ The contributors to a respective volume edited by Cynthia Kosso and Anne Scott (2009) have already laid the foundation for a more cultural-historical approach to the study of water.¹³² In order to add further dimensions in the present context, drawing from the history of sciences, Thomas Willard, in the final contribution to this volume, offers, parallel to and yet different from Thomas G. Benedek's contribution, an examination of how early modern scientists viewed water, analyzed and evaluated its properties, and tested the various qualities of water, often in a surprisingly far-sighted and comprehensive fashion.

While most other contributions to this volume are engaged with probing the symbolic and metaphorical, spiritual and religious significance of water, Willard highlights the importance of water in early modern research. The focus in David

¹³¹ *Die Wasserversorgung im Mittelalter. Geschichte der Wasserversorgung*, 4 (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 1991); Heinz Maria Lins, *Geschichte und Geschichten um Wasser-Ärzte-Bäder vom Altertum bis zum Mittelalter* (Frankfurt a. M.: Fischer, 1995); Wolfgang Schmid, “Brunnen und Gemeinschaften im Mittelalter,” *Historische Zeitschrift* 267.3 (1998): 561–86; See now Rita Mukherjee and Radhika Seshan, “Introduction: Approaches to a Water History,” *Water History* 7.2 (2015): 147–49. The entire volume proves to be highly valuable for the larger issue at stake here.

¹³² *The Nature and Function of Water, Baths, Bathing, and Hygiene from Antiquity through the Renaissance*, ed. Cynthia Kosso and Anne Scott (see note 25).

Tomíček's and Benedek's articles rest on baths and spas from a medical point-of-view, whereas Willard concentrates on the scientific examination of water itself.

While all medical, scientific, philosophical, and theological investigations from antiquity (Aristotle, Galen) to ca. 1500 had been content with describing water in its phenomenal appearance, such as being a part of the four basic humors, since then a paradigm shift was taking place that established the foundation of modern sciences. Beginning with Martin Ruland (1532–1602), Willard investigates how the new critical thinkers turned their attention to the true properties of water, which they still regarded, probably correctly so, as the original matter of all being (Martin Heidegger). After all, water appears in a myriad of material manifestations, which makes its careful chemical analysis relatively difficult, especially since the early scientists were still lacking some of the most important instruments for measurement and analysis.

Marie Meurdrac (ca. 1610–ca. 1680) was virtually the only woman chemist from that time known to us, and she also turned her attention to the investigation of water, while studying many other elements as well. She openly revealed her admiration for Paracelsus, especially with regard to the ‘usefulness’ of mercury, but her own approach was more detailed and analytic, especially with respect to water.

At the same time the interest in spas grew in England, following, as some of the previous contributions have already indicated, their great popularity on the Continent. Edward Jorden (ca. 1560–1632) was the first to examine the advantages of spa water for bodily health, indicating his familiarity with continental writings on this topic, as influenced originally by Paracelsus. In fact, as Willard alerts us, many new spas were discovered all over England by the late sixteenth century, which promoted the general well-being of the English population. Many medical authors such as Timothy Bright (ca. 1551–1615) and John French (ca. 1616–1657) discussed the various waters in those spas and made many recommendations and critical observations.

A new stage was reached when Robert Boyle (1627–1691) turned his attention to the specific properties of water, identifying the fundamental components, the acids and bases, which opened the door to a more chemical approach by means of his inductive methodology. This allowed him to identify the salt contents of mineral waters, employing numerous different tests, which was then strongly improved and refined by the father of modern chemistry, Antoine Lavoisier (1743–1794). He focused, above all, on the question whether one element can be turned into another, and vice versa, which allowed him to discover specific properties of the various chemical compositions. But water turned out not to be an element by itself, but to consist of two parts, oxygen and hydrogen, the two basic building blocks of the entire universe.

Ironically then, as Willard concludes, we can observe an intriguing link between ancient philosophers and post-modern scientists who all consistently agree that water proves to be the fundamental material of all existence, one of the most basic constitutive elements of life itself. It is also worth noting here that the early modern scientists would not have reached their insights regarding water, if they had not been able to base their observations on the studies carried out by their predecessors who had begun to investigate the importance and specific properties of mineral water in spas all over Europe.¹³³

It is my honor and pleasure to conclude this Introduction with some words of thanks and gratitude. The articles published here were first presented at the twelfth International Symposium on Medieval and Early Modern Studies at The University of Arizona, Tucson, May 1–3, 2015. Subsequently most papers delivered there were translated into extensively researched and expanded pieces readied for publication. Some presenters later did not participate in this volume, while some new authors joined us in the subsequent stages. Each piece has been extensively reviewed and vetted by myself and a number of other contributors. I am very grateful to all authors for their patience and diligence in that lengthy and demanding process.

My co-editor of the series “Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture,” Marilyn Sandidge, deserves the usual credit for her tireless and generous efforts in reading the Introduction and individual contributions, providing valuable input overall. Thomas Willard was kind enough to offer critical feedback for my own and other contributions, as a number of the individual authors did as well. Prof. Willard also gave me valuable feedback to the Introduction. In this respect, I am proud to have served as the editor of this new volume, which brings together so many valuable scholarly investigations, opening new perspectives toward the Middle Ages and the early modern age, specifically bridging the gaps between many different disciplines.

The original symposium upon which this volume is based would not have been possible if my university would not have provided me with invaluable support, making meeting rooms, technical equipment, staff assistance, and conference materials available. Various departments offered some financial support, which allowed me to extend the hopefully best possible hospitality to all participants and a large number of my students. In particular, I would like to express my thanks to German Studies, Spanish and Portuguese, English, French and Italian,

¹³³ See also the contribution to this volume by David Tomíček, who focuses on Bohemian medical tracts and regimens.

then to the University of Arizona Committee of Medieval, Renaissance, and Reformation Studies (UAMARRC), and the Dean of the College of Humanities. As in the past, I am also most grateful to the staff at the Walter de Gruyter publishing house in Berlin for their excellent support in the final editing stage. We are blessed for being driven by a kind of cooperative team spirit which makes it to a real joy producing such a hefty tome once again, in which medieval and early modern scholarship has harmoniously come together, approaching the universally significant topic of “Hygiene, Medicine, and Well-Being” from interdisciplinary and comparative perspectives.

I find it enormously far-reaching and enriching that literary scholars, historians, experts on the history of medicine and also on the history of science, and others have found together in this volume, which tries to contribute further insights into a global, hence fundamental topic relevant for cultural, social, medical, religious, and literary history. The concern with human health, hygiene, and well-being is a timeless issue, and the extent to which poets, writers, theologians, medical doctors, and others have reflected on it already since the early Middle Ages and ever since supports the powerful claim that the notion of a ‘dark,’ ‘dirty,’ or ‘sickly’ pre-modern age simply has to be dismissed.

Of course, epidemics such as the Black Death could not be combated effectively, if at all, but even we today face huge and serious challenges regarding AIDS and Ebola, for instance.¹³⁴ Undoubtedly, our level of hygiene and health has risen tremendously, almost to the point where extreme cleanliness triggers new waves of sicknesses because there are not enough bacteria around any longer against which our human immune system has to fight, which now begins to prevent the constant activation and development of that system itself.

Naturally, every approach to our subject matter depends on the social class and the degree of an individual’s intellectual education when we think about personal hygiene and well-being, and this was not much different in the pre-modern history. Finally, as a matter of fact, the medieval and early modern world handled sicknesses quite differently than we do, and we tend to shudder, at least among the lay audience, when we think about their specific medicines and medical

¹³⁴ See the contributions to this volume by Warren Tormey, Daniel F. Piggs, Debra L. Stoudt, and Sarah Gordon. As to the history of epidemics, see J. N. Hays, *The Burdens of Disease: Epidemics and Human Response in Western History* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1998); Ole Jørgen Benedictow, *What Disease was Plague?: On the Controversy Over the Microbiological Identity of Plague Epidemics of the Past*. Brill’s Series in the History of the Environment, 2 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2010); Mark D. Hardt, *History of Infectious Disease Pandemics in Urban Societies* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2016). Cf. also Aberth, *Plagues in World History* (see note 89), and the other studies cited there.

practices. However, here disregarding epidemic phenomena, people lived well and surprisingly long already then, and sometimes their concepts or medicines worked perhaps even better than what we have available today.¹³⁵

In this respect it makes perfect sense to investigate the topics addressed in this volume, and this also from a cultural-historical perspective. These are fundamental issues, once again, most fitting for our book series. Little wonder that the issue of water, above all, for drinking, cleaning, cooking, and for medicinal purposes was of such supreme importance.¹³⁶ This will certainly warrant further investigations and stimulate new interdisciplinary research joining together, for instance, medicine with the humanities and history, or chemistry/pharmacy with literary studies.¹³⁷

¹³⁵ See the contributions to *Old Age in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance: Interdisciplinary Approaches to a Neglected Topic*, ed. Albrecht Classen. Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture, 2 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2007). Cf. also *Bader, Medicus und Weise Frau: Wege und Erfolg der mittelalterlichen Heilkunst* (Munich: Battenberg, 2000).

¹³⁶ *Ohne Wasser ist kein Heil: medizinische und kulturelle Aspekte der Nutzung von Wasser*, ed. Sylvelyn Hähner-Rombach. Medizin, Gesellschaft und Geschichte, Beiheft, 25 (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2005).

¹³⁶ *Ohne Wasser ist kein Heil: medizinische und kulturelle Aspkte der Nutzung von Wasser*, ed. Sylvelyn Hähner-Rombach. Medizin, Gesellschaft und Geschichte, Beiheft, 25 (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2005).

¹³⁷ See also my forthcoming monograph, *Water in Medieval Literature* (Lanham, Boulder, et al.: Lexington Books). Most intriguingly, as we can conclude already, this and similar topics strongly invite interdisciplinary investigations, combining, for instance, research on the history of medicine and science with literary, art historical, religious, and philosophical scholarship. See now also the contributions to volume 34 of *Medizin, Gesellschaft und Geschichte* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2016).

Warren Tormey

Treating the Condition of ‘Evil’ in the Anglo-Saxon Herbals

The third section of *Bald’s Leechbook*, dated to the late ninth century and regarded by scholarly authorities as more closely aligned with native Anglo-Saxon healing traditions than the first two books,¹ begins by offering various cures for headache. Calling for “little stones in the stomachs of a swallow’s fledglings,” one remedy is described as “good for headache, and for eye-pain, and for the enemy’s temptations, and for night-goers, and the spring ailment, and nightmares, and herbal restraint, and enchantments, and evil charm-workings” (*Leechbook III*, ch. 1).² The *Lacnunga*, a later tenth century healing guide likewise associated with Anglo-Saxon native healing practices, features a number of remedies for various

¹ Maria Amalia D’Aronco, “Gardens on Vellum: Plants and Herbs in the Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts,” *Health and Healing from the Medieval Garden*, ed. Peter Dendle and Alain Touwaide (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press, 2008), 101–27, describes this third section as “the oldest surviving book of medicine in Anglo-Saxon England” (111), while M. L. Cameron, “*Bald’s Leechbook* and Cultural Interactions in Anglo-Saxon England,” *Anglo-Saxon England* 19 (Dec. 1990): 5–12, holds *III* as “the most English in its background, owing little to other medical cultures ...” (6). Cameron explains this interpretation, distinguishing between the first two parts of the *Leechbook*, which are commonly referred to as “*Bald’s Leechbook*” (the term used here unless otherwise specified), and which “seem to have been compiled about the end of the ninth century,” while “[t]he third, anonymous, part of the *Leechbook* originated probably at about the same time ...” (6). The term *Leechbook III* will be used here when referring to this portion of the text.

Leechbooks I–III survive in British MS Royal 12 D xvii and are found in facsimile in C. E. Wright, *Bald’s Leechbook: British Museum Royal Manuscript 12 D. XVII*. Early English Manuscripts in Facsimile, 5 (Copenhagen: Rosenkilde and Bagger, 1955). A current but unpublished edition is by Marilyn Deegan, ed., “A Critical Edition of MS. B.L. Royal 12.D.xvii: Bald’s Leechbook” (Ph.D dissertation, University of Manchester, 1991). For materials taken from *Leechbooks I* and *II* in the present study, I have used an earlier edition and translation: *Leechdoms, Wortcunning, and Starcraft in Early England*, ed. T. O. Cockayne (London: Longman, Roberts and Green, 1865), accessed via Google Books.

² MS Harley 585, fol. 160r–161r: “þa laþan, ðe geond lond fereð.” For the sake of clarity and to preserve modern usage, translations for the *Lacnunga* are drawn from two sources: Steven Pollington’s *Leechcraft: Early English Charms, Plantlore, and Healing* (2000; Norfolk: Anglo-Saxon Books, 2003), 184–247; textual translations, where relevant, are taken from J. H. G. Grattan’s and Charles Singer’s *Anglo-Saxon Magic and Medicine: Illustrated Specially from the Semi-Pagan Text ‘Lacnunga’* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1952).

Warren Tormey, Middle Tennessee State University

afflictions, described vaguely as “evils” and also in more overtly demonic terms, that conjoin herbal treatments, prayer, Latin incantations, ritual elements, and other remedies that range from simple herbal application to complex communal healing rituals.

Seen as a legitimate medical affliction throughout the corpus of Anglo-Saxon herbal guides, the condition of ‘evil’ occupied a middle ground in healing that reflected and influenced ‘invisible’ causes of illness, the origins of which can be seen to be in flux between Germanic elves, night goers, charms, and Christian devils and demons. In this paper I argue that the Anglo-Saxon herbals reflect this “middle ground” of medical discourse between two cultures and two religious traditions, and treatments for “evil,” either in the form of abstraction or as personification, captures the carry-over of treatments from Saxon to Christian traditions as the cause of illness and the etiology of disease changes to reflect the anxieties of an increasingly pervasive Christian world view.

A third healing guide, the Old English *Herbarium*, is a direct translation combining two Latin botanicals, the *De Herba Betonica* attributed to the first-century Roman physician Antonius Musa and the fourth-century *Herbarium* of pseudo-Apuleius. Judged to be contemporary with the *Lacnunga* and also dating to the later tenth century,³ the Old English *Herbarium* is more fully aligned with ecclesiastically sanctioned medical traditions. Even so, afflictions of “evil” appear throughout this work of continental origins in a series of treatments for “the approach of evil,” the “evil eye,” “evil spells,” treatments to ward off “night-goers,” and remedies for a series of other vaguely defined conditions where evil is presented as a medical malady. In one instance, the plant *pes leonis*, or Lion’s Foot, is used to treat those in the “condition of being under an evil spell.” In order to “untie them” from the affliction, the healer is instructed to

take five of the plants we call lion’s foot without their roots, simmer them in water while the moon is waning, and wash the person with it. Lead the person out of the house in the early

³ Cameron, “Bald’s *Leechbook* and Cultural Interactions in Anglo-Saxon England” (see note 1), describes the date of composition of the *Lacnunga* as “somewhat later, perhaps near the end of the following century, and the translation of the *Herbarium* at some time in the tenth century also ...” (6). Further, he usefully summarizes the key distinctions between the three works of Anglo-Saxon herbal Healing: “Bald’s *Leechbook*, a carefully compiled document, its material (*in Books I and II – italics mine*) drawn in large part from the medical background of the Graeco-Roman world, is most useful for this purpose. *Lacnunga*, which is a sort of commonplace book, although compiled without order or any evidence of medical training, is also useful; the *Herbarium*, being a translation, can be assumed to reflect Anglo-Saxon culture only where it can be shown that its material was assimilated into Anglo-Saxon medical use ...” (6).

evening and fumigate him with the birthwort plant. When going outside, the person must not look back; in this way you can undo the condition.⁴

Treatments for the torments of evil, as opposed to the more overt threats posed by demonic influences, or the equally pernicious harassment at the hands of elfin attackers, represent a similarly elusive but distinct category of Anglo-Saxon medical practice, fitting within a process by which, according to Karen Jolly, “amoral creatures like elves were gradually demonized to fit into the Good-Evil paradigm of the Christian moral universe.”⁵ Unlike afflictions attributable to overtly demonic or distinctly pre-Christian influences, however, this more vaguely defined category of malady, though described by Audrey Meany as “degraded in concept, often to devils, after the coming of Christianity,”⁶ existed uneasily within physiological, psychological, pathological, and spiritual realms. The famed, enigmatic, and textually incomplete “Nine Herbs Charm” serves as a useful example, addressing specific herbs and attributing to each the power to confront both pathological maladies and malicious abstractions. Three sets

⁴ *Herbarium*, ch. 8. Translations from the Old English *Herbarium* are taken from Anne Van Arsdall, *Medieval Herbal Remedies: The Old English Herbarium and Anglo-Saxon Medicine* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 119–230. Transcriptions of both the Anglo-Saxon and Latin original text are taken from *The Old English Herbarium and Medicina De Quadrupedibus*, ed. Hubert Jan de Vriend. Early English Text Society, 286 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984). Performing extensive textual analysis of the four Old English versions of the *Old English Herbarium* and accounting for variants among the extant manuscripts, De Vriend provides the full text of the *Herbarium* from two primary manuscripts: MS Cotton Vitellius C iii and MS London, British Library, Harley 6258 B. He also includes text from earlier Latin manuscripts upon which the Old English translations are based, from MS Montecassino, Archivo della Badia, V. 97 and MS Leiden, Bibliotheek der Rijksuniversiteit, Vossianus Latinus Q 9. D’Aronco, “Gardens on Vellum: Plants and Herbs in the Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts” (see note 1) offers the “tentative hypothesis” that Vitellius C iii “was transcribed about the first quarter of the eleventh century in one of the Canterbury *scriptoria* from an exemplar in square Insular script made at Winchester toward the end of the tenth century” (123).

⁵ Karen Jolly, *Popular Religion in Late Saxon England: Elf Charms in Context* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 136.

⁶ Audrey Meany, “The Anglo-Saxon View of the Causes of Illness,” *Health, Disease, and Healing in Medieval Culture*, ed. Sheila Campbell, Bert Hall, David Klausner. Introduction by Faye Marie Getz (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1992), 12–33; here 18.

of verses within the prayer pay tribute to mugwort, waybread,⁷ and nettle,⁸ each proclaiming the power of these plants to ward off "the evil that travels around the land."⁹ Healing practices for this condition nonetheless resonate within the three Anglo-Saxon herbal healing guides, suggesting that it regularly merited the attention of healers both inside and outside of the influences of the Church.

Treatments for "evil" therefore occupied a space between popular and official traditions. In this position these treatments capture the tensions between established Christian and native pagan healing practices, and figure in the three surviving herbal healing guides that exist in Old English, each with its own distinctive character and origins.¹⁰ If afflicted by a vague sense of evil, the Anglo-

⁷ Peter Dendle, "Plants in the Early Medieval Cosmos: Herbs, Divine Potency, and the *Scala natura*." *Health and Healing* (see note 1), 47–59, identifies this plant as the "plantago maior," the "broadleaf" or "common plantain." Known for its astringent qualities, the Old English *Herbarium* describes how waybread, or *plantago maior*, is used to soothe irritated membranes and to treat various gastric and intestinal ailments (see Van Arsdall, *Medieval Herbal Remedies* [see note 4], 142–45).

⁸ Grattan and Singer, *Anglo-Saxon Magic and Medicine: Illustrated Specially from the Semi-Pagan Text 'Lacnunga'* (see note 2) refer to the plant as "stithe" (ASax: *stiðe*), which is defined in J. R. Clark Hall's and H. D. Merritt's *Concise Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*, 4th ed. (1960; Cambridge University Press, 1993), 322, as a word that conveys the senses of "strong," "strict," "severe," or "bitter," but refers also to "the name of a plant." Here I follow the example of Pollington, *Leechcraft: Early English Charms, Plantlore, and Healing* (see note 2), who uses the more familiar term "nettle."

⁹ Translations from *Leechbook III* are drawn from Pollington, *Leechcraft: Early English Charms, Plantlore, and Healing* (see note 2).

¹⁰ Cameron, "Bald's *Leechbook* and Cultural Interactions in Anglo-Saxon England" (see note 1), usefully summarizes the distinctions between these three guides: "Three extensive medical documents survive in Old English: the three parts of the *Leechbook*, the *Lacnunga* and the Old English translation of the *Herbarium* of pseudo-Apuleius. The *Leechbook*, particularly the first two parts known as 'Bald's *Leechbook*', seem to have been compiled about the end of the ninth century. The third, anonymous, part of the *Leechbook* originated probably at about the same time, (say) in the final years of Alfred's reign; the *Lacnunga* somewhat later, perhaps near the end of the following century, and the translation of the *Herbarium* at some time in the tenth century also Bald's *Leechbook*, a carefully compiled document, its material drawn in large part from the medical background of the Graeco-Roman world, is most useful for this purpose. *Lacnunga*, which is a sort of commonplace book, although compiled without order or any evidence of medical training, is also useful; the *Herbarium*, being a translation, can be assumed to reflect Anglo-Saxon culture only where it can be shown that its material was assimilated into Anglo-Saxon medical use ... The third part of the *Leechbook* is the most English in its background, owing little to other medical cultures ..." (5–6). Referring to the Old English *Herbarium* by its other commonly-used name, the *Herbarium Apulei*, Linda E. Voigts, "Anglo Saxon Plant Remedies and the Anglo-Saxons," *Isis* 70.2 (June 1979): 250–68, explains that this "late antique herbal (is) falsely attributed to Apuleius and expanded to 185 plants by the addition of the treatise on

Saxon patient required treatments that were commonly associated by Church authorities with witchcraft, magic, idolatry, and superstition. Any medicine bearing the taint of paganism aroused the suspicions of those within the Anglo-Saxon Church, who sought to guide the ill and afflicted toward Church-sanctioned remedies which were held to assure one's spiritual well-being as much as one's physical wellness. Those suffering under evil charms or spells required treatments and remedies that underscore the opaque character of Anglo-Saxon medicine to modern sensibilities, even as this body of medieval medical practice shows, as confirmed by the recent revelations of the efficacy of an eye-salve from *Bald's Leechbook* for staphylococcus infections,¹¹ its occasional capacity to bring about practical and effective remedy.

In his sermon on the *Passion of St. Bartholomew the Apostle*, Aelfric confirms this suspicion toward non-Christian medicine, famously reminding his audience that the recovery of one's physical health is first a spiritual endeavor, and ultimately, a gift from God. In preaching that this recovery must therefore be sought not through practices of witchcraft or idolatry, but exclusively through Church-sanctioned medicine, he underscores the polarity between these two distinct medical realms:

The Christian man, who in any of this like is afflicted, and he then will seek his health at unallowed practices, or at accursed enchantments, or at any witchcraft, then will he be like to those heathen men, who offered to an idol for their bodies' health, and so destroyed their souls. Let him who is sick pray for his health to his Lord, and patiently endure the stripes; let him behold how long the true Leech provides, and buy not, through any devil's craft, with his soul, his body's health; let him also ask the blessing of good men, and seek his health at holy relics. It is not allowed to any Christian man to fetch his health from any stone, nor from any tree, unless it be the holy sign of the rood, nor from any place, unless it be the holy house of God: he who does otherwise, undoubtedly commits idolatry.¹²

betony of Antonius Musa and some of the pseudo Dioscoridean *ex herbis feminis* recipes; the plant remedies are followed by remedies obtained from animals, *De taxone* and the *Medicina de quadrupedibus* of Sextus Platonicus" (250–51). Voigts then explains that the richly illustrated MS Cotton Vitellius C iii accompanies other three non-illustrated manuscripts composed in Old English: MS Harley 6258b (late twelfth or early thirteenth century), MS Harley 585 (late tenth or early eleventh century), and MS Bodleian Hatton (mid-eleventh century).

¹¹ See "1,000-year-old Onion and Garlic Eye Remedy Kills MRSA," bbc.com. 30 March 2015 (last accessed on Dec. 1, 2015), and "Anglo-Saxon Eye Potion Helps Fight Against Superbug," wired.co.uk. 31 March 2011 (last accessed on Dec. 1, 2015).

¹² "Se cristena mann ðe on ænigre þissere gelincnysse bið gebrocod, and he ðonne his hælðe secan wyle æt unalyfedum tilungum, oððe æt wyrigedum galdrum, opþe æt ænigum wicce-cræfte, ðonne bið he ðam hæðenum mannum gelíc, þe ðam deofolgylde geoffrodon for heora lichaman hælðe, and swa heora sawla amyrdon. Se ðe geuntrumod beo, bidde his hæle æt his

In representing the common polarities between the sanctioned attitudes of the Church toward health and healing as opposed to those native healing practices cast in non-Christian terms as "witchcraft," "accursed enchantments," "devil's craft," and "idolatry," Aelfric offers a familiar and polarizing viewpoint that masks the much more complicated reality in which established Church and native pagan cultures interacted. In treating vaguely defined "evils" and other like afflictions, those cultures also complimented one another, borrowed from each other, shared their most useful aspects, and ultimately reflected patterns of assimilation by both during the long process by which Saxon England became Christianized.

In noting these tensions, Anglo-Saxon scholars have used the Anglo-Saxon herbals and other sources as a lens through which to view patterns of assimilation between monastic and native cultures, both of which were inclined to see the pursuit of health in conjoined physiological and spiritual terms. Despite the cautions offered by Aelfric, Wulfstan, Bede (to a lesser extent), and others about the moral hazards one encounters in seeking non-sanctioned native medicine, scholars have exposed a vast middle ground of syncretic practices that existed in the intersections between the institutional Anglo-Saxon Church and the slowly Christianizing population that it sought to make inroads into and minister to. In her study about the tensions between practitioners of magic and those within the Church, for example, Valerie I. J. Flint writes that "the problems posed to the early medieval Christian Church by magic was one of gargantuan dimensions,"¹³ and discusses the many dimensions to the complicated process by which that institution rejected, accommodated, and appropriated popular practices and traditions.

Focusing her work on the process of assimilation that took place in everyday realms between Church-sanctioned officialdom and native Saxon popular culture, Jolly considers the roles that a conjoined field of Christian and native practices all played in treating the afflicted, including elements of magic, ritual, liturgy, and practical medicine. In her study of elf-charms Jolly articulates how Saxon remedies reflect "middle practices," or the "in-between practices ..." that

Drihtne, and geðyldelice þa swingla forbere; loc hú lange se soða læce hit foresceawige, and ne beceapige na ðurh ænigne deofles cræft mid his sawle ðæs lichaman gesundfulnysse; bidde eac góddra manna bletsunge, and æt halgum reliquium his hæle gesece. Nis nanum cristenum menn alyfed þæt he his hæle gefecce æt nanum stane, ne æt nanum treowe, buton hit sy halig rode-tacen, ne æt namre stowe, buton hit sy halig Godes hus: se ðe elles deð, he begæð untwyllice hæðengild." Original text and translation taken from <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks> (last accessed on Dec. 15, 2015).

¹³ Valerie I. J. Flint, *The Rise of Magic in Early Medieval Europe* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991), 71.

show “how Christianity and Anglo-Saxon culture were fused” in an “interaction between the formal Church and popular experience.”¹⁴ She confirms this reading by explaining how Saxon healing rituals conjoined elements of liturgy, folklore, and medical practice to address a variety of individual and communal maladies.

More recently, D’Aronco confirms the syncretic character of Anglo-Saxon medicine in terms that conjoin formal ecclesiastical and popular native traditions, enabling the transmission of Latin texts into Old English:

It is a valuable clue that Anglo-Saxon England had a lively interest in medicine, an interest that was not confined to the literati, that is, those who could master the Latin Language. This interest made another enterprise possible in another fifty years: the translation of a number of Latin treatises which preserved the knowledge of remedies derived from herbs and animals that Late Antiquity had handed down to the Middle Ages.¹⁵

Finally, Peter Dendle has recently tied this specific tension to larger currents of assimilation that played out across early medieval Europe, where conflicts between popular tradition and the influence of the early Church were negotiated. In his recently published study of Demon possession, Dendle expounds upon this process, noting how

[p]opular practices were also instrumental in forming early Christian beliefs and custom, though these practices are much harder to reconstruct through the literate manuscript tradition ... It is now better understood to what extent there was a disconnect between commentators and theologians on one hand and on the other, the local healers and those who were often in closer and more extensive contact with large numbers of illiterate Christians.¹⁶

Although the herbal healing guides reflect treatments for a number of commonly recognized medical maladies, the various vaguely defined and superstition-laden

14 Jolly, *Popular Religion in Late Saxon England: Elf Charms in Context* (see note 5), 3–4. Jolly also explains the vast middle ground between pagan and Christian polarities that scholars tend to leave unconsidered: “The tendency in western thought to propound mutually exclusive opposites – whether it be Good and Evil, God and the Devil, Magic and Religion, or Civilized and Barbarian, Christian and Pagan, Religion and Science – is only useful as a means to understanding the dialectal interaction between these forces or tendencies. As ideas these extremes are quite powerful, but the realities of human existence range between them. It is between magic and religion, between clergy and laity, and between liturgy and medicine that interests me as evidence of how conversion to Christianity took place in the everyday world through a process of acculturation” (3).

15 D’Aronco, “Gardens on Vellum: Plants and Herbs in the Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts” (see note 1), 111–12.

16 Peter Dendle, *Demon Possession in Anglo Saxon England* (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 2014), 56.

afflictions can be read today as distant echoes of native, pre-Christian medicine that is audible in all three of the surviving Old English healing guides. In cases that associated demonic or merely elfin activity with a more amorphous strain of evil, or which mandated that liturgical elements, invocations, and rituals enabled treatment, we will first see that demon possession implies a bodily takeover by a demonic agent and secondly that elf-sickness refers to a debilitating and perpetual nuisance by a bad-acting boogeyman. "Evil" stands as a third category, less a personified affliction and more as an aura, a chimeric presence existing in a pre-anthropomorphic state. As such, it is harder to imagine, harder to explain, and harder to treat. Speaking generally of the use of ritual in treating such a condition, Jolly writes that

Those remedies with special words or rites were usually for ailments associated with the devil or *other unseen evils* requiring a special appeal to those good powers that can give strength to the herbs. The convergence of liturgy and folklore in medical practice was a consequence of the nature of the evil being fought – whether that evil be a demon of classical origin or an elf of Germanic origin. The charms, then, make sense in the context of the medical, liturgical, and folkloric traditions in which they developed.¹⁷ (italics mine)

Mindful that treatments for "evil" as described in the *Lacnunga*, the *Herbarium*, and *Bald's Leechbook* are best judged as reflecting a syncretic tradition that combines monastic and native elements, a full field of materials, rituals, remedies, and liturgical elements are used in combination to treat this nebulous affliction positioned within "the textual boundary between popular and formal."¹⁸

Thus we approach the herbals mindful of their probable ecclesiastical provenance and their distant echo of deeper pre-Christian attitudes toward disease and approaches to healing, with the condition of "evil" occupying an especially problematic space within this contextual nexus. Dendle writes about the concept of evil within various earlier traditions, including the Hebrew and the Judeo-Christian. Given its amorphous material nature, evil is "viewed as an active force or substance." As such, it is transferable from one being to another, with the process of that transfer carried out via distinct healing rituals. Describing these traditions of ritual healing, Dendle observes, "the rhetorical means of driving this stuff of evil from an infected person or house is to fragment and dissipate it, conceptually – to reduce it to its essential elements,"¹⁹ thereby diminishing each element of the affliction to a less potent state. The goal of treatment lies in reducing evil to

17 Jolly, *Popular Religion in Late Saxon England: Elf Charms in Context* (see note 5), 103.

18 Jolly, *Popular Religion in Late Saxon England: Elf Charms in Context* (see note 5), 20.

19 Dendle, *Demon Possession in Anglo Saxon England* (see note 16), 44.

that state of diminished potency, an objective central to the remedies described in the Anglo-Saxon herbals. As the following examples establish, this goal was sought most frequently by combining elements of native and liturgical rituals with herbal remedies to separate patients psychologically and emotionally from those “evils” that threatened their health. The healers’ goal was to confirm their capacities to resist those threats, to strengthen their connections to community and faith traditions, and to prompt their response to the healing potencies within the herbs themselves. Derived both from established healing practices of Mediterranean origin and from the Germanic traditions embedded in the extant Saxon herbals, the means to heal the afflicted from various vaguely defined “evils” rested upon these syncretic foundations.

Treatments prepared to fight demon possession are recorded in all three herbals. For instance, in the Old English *Herbarium* treatments for demon possession, or “devil-sickness” (*deofulseocnyssa*) begin with applications of the plants mugwort (*Artemisa vulgaris*) and mandrake (*Mandragora officianarum*—where “devil sickness”²⁰ is equated with “gewitleaste,” or “insanity”), and with greater periwinkle (*Vinca maior*); this condition is also treated via fumigation with a plant identified as heartwort or birthwort (*Aristolochia rotunda* or *clematis*).²¹ Interestingly, the *Herbarium* reflects little in terms of syncretic blending with elements of liturgical ritual, such as combining the herb with wine or administering it within the larger context of a prayer. That said, it contains no reference to elves and makes only a single reference to a night-goer (“*unhyrum nighthengum*”).

20 Meany, “The Anglo-Saxon View of the Causes of Illness” (see note 6), offers some useful speculation on the etiological roots for this condition: “From symptoms described in some miracles in Bede’s *Ecclesiastical History* and Felix’s *Life of St. Guthlac* it seems that both homicidal schizophrenia and epilepsy could be considered devil-possession. Sometimes we can get clues about what is meant from the Latin source, or from the context in which the disease is mentioned ... When we put this all together, it seems that the term *devil-sickness* is used for illnesses that turn the minds and affect the bodies of the sufferers, so that they lose control. Not surprisingly (since there are no medical cures), it appears in descriptions of miracles rather than in medical texts” (17).

21 Identifications and *Herbarium* translations by Van Arsdall, *Medieval Herbal Remedies: The Old English Herbarium and Anglo-Saxon Medicine* (see note 4). Here she references the Anglo-Saxon term “*deofulsocnyssa*” taken from two of the original Old English versions that appear in de Vriend, *The Old English Herbarium and Medicina De Quadrupedibus* (see note 4). The concept of possession in the aforementioned treatments is reflected in the Latin term *daemonia*, referring to “one possessed by demons,” and, in the case of the mandrake, equated with the “*epilempicos*,” or “one suffering spasms.” The medical dimensions to these concepts are usefully considered in Dendle, *Demon Possession in Anglo Saxon England* (see note 16), 91–100 (on demon possession) and 187–91 (on epilepsy).

This single allusion is to a non-demonic, anthropomorphized manifestation of evil which is treated with wood betony (*Stachys officianalis*) and which “protects a person from dreadful nightmares and from terrifying visions and dreams.”²² Given the presumed (but problematic) first- century origins of this first chapter of the *Herbarium*, we might assume that both affliction and treatment predate the advent of Christianity, so that the efficacy of the treatment rests in the belief in the potency of the prescribed herb.

Treatment for a comparably vague personification of an evil spirit is captured in the description of the aster (*aster amellus*), associated with the moon and with Virgo, such that it “shines at night like the stars in the skies, and those who see it without knowing that, say that they have seen a heavenly apparition”²³ Significantly, this herb is used to treat the condition of epilepsy (“*fylleseocnysse*; *caducos*), a condition closely associated with “*deofulseocnyssa*” but without the taint of association with the demonic. Even so, two other herbs are used to ward off this personified evil. In the case of the first, the healer is instructed to hold the dwarf elder plant (*Sambucus ebulus*) in hand and sing nine times, “*Omnes malas bestias canto*,” as a part of a remedy “for snakebite” and also to “enchant and overcome all evil wild beasts,”²⁴ thus driving them away; and the field eryngno (*Eryngium campestre*) also protects the virtuous person by warding off a personified evil, for “whoever has this root with him will avoid all evil footprints coming toward him; indeed, because of it, the evil person will either turn away or yield to him.”²⁵

Although the *Herbarium* records few examples where evil is personified as a nightmare, apparition, beast, malefactor, or treatments for those in possession by a demon, it offers many instances where a vaguer conception of evil is first treated, and then later mitigated, according to a specific herbal remedy. Beyond

²² Translated by van Arsdall as “dreadful nightmares”; the Latin terms used by De Vriend, *The Old English Herbarium and Medicina De Quadrupedibus* (see note 4) are “nocturnas ambulationes” and “visos timendos.”

²³ In Anglo-Saxon, from de Vriend, *The Old English Herbarium and Medicina De Quadrupedibus* (see note 4): “scineð on night swilce stœrra on heofone, 7 se ðe hy [nytende] gesitð, he sæð þæt he scinlac geseo, 7 swa afærēd he bið ...”; and Latin: “nocte tamquam stella in caelo lucet ut qui videt ignorans dicit fantasma se videre et metu [plenus] irridetur”.

²⁴ In Anglo-Saxon, from de Vriend, *The Old English Herbarium and Medicina De Quadrupedibus* (see note 4): “Besing 7 ofercum ealle yfele wildeor”; and in Latin: “Omnes malas bestias canto.”

²⁵ In Anglo-Saxon, from de Vriend, *The Old English Herbarium and Medicina De Quadrupedibus* (see note 4): “Se þæt þas wyrte mid him hafað, aeghwylce yfele fotswaðu ongean cumende he forbugeþ; ge forðon se yfela man hyne forcyreþ oððe him onbugeþ”; and in Latin: “hanc ergo qui secum habuerit quaecumque vestigia contravenienti diffugiente taliam idem partem homo maius sedavit ille.”

the aforementioned instances in which evil is treated by lion's foot (*Pes leonis*), the condition of evil is more present as an abstraction, as a threat to one's home, to one's mental well-being, to one's physical health, or to the traveler. As a deterrent to the general threat of evil, we have the sow thistle (*Sonchus oleraceus*), the white hellebore (*Veratrum album*), the scotch thistle (*Acanthus mollis*), the sage-leaved germander (*Teucrium scorodonia* or *polium*), the peony (cross listed as *paeonia officianalis*, which wards off insanity, and *Paeonia*. Whoever carries this latter herb will be especially secure, for “evil will be afraid”)²⁶ and great mullein (*Verbascum thapsus*), which, as explained, was given by Mercury to Ulysses so that he remain unafraid of Circe's evil deeds. Finally, some specified defenses against evil – or more specifically, the means to ward it off – are also described. Protection against evil in one's house is gained by placing the mandrake plant in its center. Protection against the “evil eye”²⁷ is also gained by placing mugwort within the house, and travelers are protected against any evils encountered while on a journey by keeping the mugwort in hand. In suggesting a middle ground between a pre-Christian remedy for a generalized threat by evil and a distinctly Christianized remedy against demon possession, both the mandrake and the mugwort plants figure as effective options in treating both conditions. Finally, savine (*Juniperus Sabina*) treats a condition called the “king's evil” (“cynelican adle”), a term referring to swollen joints of the feet (“syna getoh 7 fota geswel”).

References to evil across the first two books of *Bald's Leechbook* suggest a condition aligned more clearly with a tangible medical malady than with an abstract threat or presence. These two books contain eighteen references to affliction by an “Evil Humor” (mostly in reference to digestive and respiratory ailments), four

²⁶ In Anglo-Saxon, from De Vriend, *The Old English Herbarium and Medicina De Quadrupedibus* (see note 4): “if hy þonne hwy mid (him bere)þ ealle yfelu hune (ondræda)ð.” No Latin textual source is available.

²⁷ This term is believed to derive from the term “effascinationes,” which appears twice within Pliny's *Natural History* as a vague reference either to envy or to witchcraft. The first reference occurs in Book XIX in a discussion of gardens, where he speaks of “effascinationes dicari vide-mus in remedio saturica signa,” or “statues of Satyrs dedicated as a charm against the sorcery of the envious” (last accessed on Dec. 1 2015 through Loeb Classics Online via: http://www.loebclassics.com/view/pliny_elder-natural_history/1938/pb_LCL371.453.xml?rskey=MHV7T8&result=1&mainRsKey=Yokl7R). The second reference, more relevant to the current topic, is in Book XXXVII, where in a discussion of types of stone he uses the term when referring to a sort of “witchcraft” that, according to “Magi” countered by the stone “antipathies,” a “contrary stone” that “Contra effascinationes auxiliari eam magi volunt” (“The Magi claim that it helps to counteract witchcraft”) (last accessed on Dec. 1, 2015 through Loeb Classics Online via: http://www.loebclassics.com/view/pliny_elder-natural_history/1938/pb_LCL419.285.xml?mainRsKey=rP-GHOK&result=2&rskey=zxgTkl).

to the “Evil Wet” (again, in reference to respiratory ailments), two to “Evil Swelling,” and one each to “Evil Vapour” and “Evil Blood.” As with select entries in the *Herbarium*, however, select passages in *Leechbook I* and *II* are prone to casting evil in more abstract terms as a malicious presence which must be banished or otherwise driven away from the afflicted person. In Chapter 35, for example, we find a series of remedies against poisons, each involving a series of herbal treatments that conclude with instruction for the threefold saying of a “Prayer to St. John.” Here treatments for the “flying venom”²⁸ are aligned with remedies for snakebite, and in the few chapters that follow we note that worm infestations and treatments for “dry diseases” call for prayer and other elements of Christian ritual performed in conjunction with the dosage of a long list of herbs.²⁹ Across these later chapters it becomes evident that a field of Christianized elements, including prayers and other components of liturgy, are increasingly combined with herbal remedies to ward off the afflictions of evil. Combining enacted ritual with herbal treatment, these later remedies are prescribed largely for a field of injuries and intrusive infestations brought on by diverse invaders including worms, wens, blains, palsies, and burns. Thus they confirm what Dendle describes as the “fluid

²⁸ In considering references from both the *Leechbook* and *Lacnunga* to “flying” venoms and poisons, Meany, “The Anglo-Saxon View of the Causes of Illness” (see note 6), offers the following explanation: “What were these ‘fliers’ thought to be? Cockayne and medical historians after him apparently took them to be epidemic viruses, which (since they pass from one person to another) might well have been imagined as blowing about in the air” (16). Meany then traces this first belief back through Bede to the works of Isidore and Galen, who maintained “that pestilence is produced from the air corrupted from excess of dryness or heat or from rain” (n. 26, 28). She then concludes that “the coupling of flying poison with swelling, discoloration, and sores in the Old English texts points rather to bacterial infection, which is indeed airborne in the dirt and dust, and makes some wounds turn bad but not others, and produces boils for no obvious reasons. Moreover, at least one of the herbs said to be good against ‘fliers,’ plantain, has antibiotic activity against many bacteria when crushed” (16).

²⁹ From Cockayne, ed., *Leechdoms, Wortcynning, and Starcraft in Early England* (see note 1): “Leechdoms for ‘dry’ diseases; ash rind, aspen rind, elm rind, quickbeam rind, the netherward part of the mickle highway nettle, wormwood, hindheal, that is, water agrimony, empurple all the rinds on the outside, and pound them thoroughly, boil them together, apply equal quantities of all, souse them with clear ale, then let the drink stand for the space of a night in a vessel, before a man shall choose to drink it. Let him in the morning drink a cup full of this drink ; in the middle of the morning hours, let him stand towards the east, let him address himself to God earnestly, and let him sign himself with the sign of the cross, let him also turn himself about as the sun goeth from east to south and west ; after the drink let him next go and stand some while ere he repose himself; let him pour as much liquid into the vessel as he removes from it : let him drink this potion for nine nights and eat what meat he will” (117).

boundaries between matter and spirit,”³⁰ offering healing rituals which “presuppose the channeling of divine power through the direct intermediary of a plant, accessed through the rites of a sort of folk liturgy.”³¹

The pattern of including ritual elements in healing applications intensifies in the later chapters of *Leechbook I*, where the conclusion of Chapter 41 records a series of treatments offered for joint soreness, or for disorders involving one’s joint fluid (*synovia*), the treatments for which calls for diverse herbs including lithwort, fan cress, silverweed, brownwort, harewort, and apple. Within the next few chapters, however, the character of the remedies seems to change, as the treatments address afflictions identified first as “fever disease” and later “lent addle,” and then prescribe remedies for *demoniacs*, for those suffering from “devil-sickness” or from comparable conditions, like “lunatics,” and those in “phrenized” conditions suggestive of a milder state of affliction. In the first instance, a concoction of herbs is given to the “fiend-sick” man who then performs an elaborate series of prayers and other ritual gestures (identified by Cockayne as a “formula for Benediction”) to achieve relief from his condition.

For these milder conditions, remedies likewise conjoin herbs, prayer, and other liturgical elements. In the movement away from tangible afflictions to more spiritually-oriented (and more vaguely defined) maladies, a pair of conditions capture this change. The first remedy is described as “the evil rune lay” and the second is presented as a defense against “elvish tricks”; and the remedy for both of these spells conjoins ritual and practical elements to enhance the healing process. That process begins with the application of the Greek *alpha* and *omega* upon the “bewitched man,” and continues with the administration of “a bramble apple, and lupins, and pulegium,” pounded together. This combination is then put into a pouch and set on an altar, and nine masses are sung over it. The residue is subsequently combined with holy water, and then administered to the patient at regular three hour intervals according to Church-hours, thus enabling regular dosage of the medicine.

Finally, the later chapters of Book *I* feature remedies for “lent addle or typhus,” for protections against “mental vacancy” and “folly,” for improved digestion of meats, for spider and dog bites, and for “salaciousness.” After disquisitions on bloodletting and various wound treatments, the book concludes with brief instructions for remedies involving loss of appetite, and for pains associated with excessive travel, excessive drinking, poor sleeping, loss of voice, hair loss, and select other conditions. The concluding Chapter 58 provides instruc-

³⁰ Dendle, “Early Medieval Cosmos” (see note 7), 54.

³¹ Dendle, “Early Medieval Cosmos” (see note 7), 56.

tions for equine ailments, a foray away from pragmatic application and into remedies that imply some application of Christian ritual elements over existing native treatments. Here it becomes clear firstly that *Leechbook I*, like the *Herbarium*, is a syncretic text that first reflects herbal treatments of Mediterranean origins, but secondly that it captures a moment in the gradual appropriation by Christian learning and medicine of pre-Christian learning and healing traditions. In that light, *Leechbook II* largely demonstrates a return to the pragmatic diagnostic character captured in the earlier and later sections of Book *I*, where “evil humor” is a medical term that accounts little for abstract maladies involving elves, demons, fiends, or the like.

Largely treating afflictions by evil as abstract maladies requiring practical remedy and Christian ritual, *Leechbooks I* and *II* show themselves to be derived largely from Mediterranean sources.³² Voigts confirms this alignment with continental healing traditions by establishing the evident exchange of information and trade in medical materials between England and Europe, arguing firstly that “Mediterranean and Eastern plants could be had in Europe throughout the early Middle Ages in a not-for-profit exchange and by way of commercial trade” and secondly that “evidence of ecclesiastical exchange of plants among Anglo-Saxons” is undeniable.³³ More recently, M. L. Cameron cites the complaint of Cyneheard, the mid eighth-century Bishop of Winchester, about the limited use of medical texts in his monastery due to the paucity of continental medicinal herbs. In the decades after Cynehard’s complaint, Cameron describes a full field of examples – including the use of silk, balsam, aloes, mastics, zedoary, and peppercorns in healing prescriptions – that imply that “before the end of the tenth century, newly imported Arab trade goods were so well known in England as to be used in the compounding of native, not borrowed, remedies.”³⁴

Reflecting less an alignment with continental sources and traditions and more an affinity for Germanic origins, however, the provenance of *Leechbook III* is of a different order, one more aligned with the *Lacnunga*,³⁵ which will be con-

³² As Daniel Pigg argues below in this volume, *Leechbooks I* and *II* likewise express the implied professionalism in and deliberative nature of treatment options available to Anglo-Saxon healers, and therefore offer insights into the crucial relationship between treatments for heat regulation and the larger constructions of masculinity as based on both performative notions and essentialist perspectives of Anglo-Saxon medicine.

³³ Voigts, “Anglo Saxon Plant Remedies and the Anglo-Saxons” (see note 10), 259 and 260.

³⁴ Cameron, “Bald’s Leechbook and Cultural Interactions” (see note 1), 11.

³⁵ Jolly’s extended explanation of these differences (*Popular Religion in Late Saxon England: Elf Charms in Context* [see note 5]) is useful here. She writes that “there are texts that contain remedies that can be traced to Anglo-Saxon or Germanic culture. These manuscripts are more

sidered below. These two texts demonstrate healing practices of native origins that conjoin ritual and herbal treatment with greater intensity. Significantly, the term “evil humor” (“*yfele wætan*”), used largely in Cockayne’s translation to identify various afflictions associated with each of the four humors in *Leechbook I* and *II*, remains absent from this third book. In fact, there are only two instances throughout this third book where the word “evil” is used, the first in reference to the “evil charm workings” (“*yfum gealdorcræftum*”) alluded to in the introduction and treated by stones taken from the swallow’s fledgling, and the second as part of a recipe for a salve treating those spiritually tenuous encounters with “the elvish race, and nightgoers, and the people with whom the devil has intercourse” (“*ælfcynne 7 nihtgengan 7 þam mannum be deoful mid hæmð*”). For treatment, a combination of thirteen herbs is placed in a vessel, set under an altar as nine masses are sung, then is boiled in butter and sheep’s grease, combined with holy salt, and strained (with the plants discarded). A patient seeking relief from either evil temptation (“*yfel costing weorþe*”), elves, or nightgoers applies this salve to face and body to ward off these threats, administering it “probably to prevent fear itself, rather than illness.”³⁶ In these two instances we find the sole instances of “evil” afflictions in *Leechbook III* that are more pervasive in the two earlier books.

More directly, this salve recipe demonstrates that a field of spiritually threatening afflictions – some overtly demonic, others slightly less pernicious – can

eclectic in compiling remedies, not just copying remedies from continental manuscripts but including others that percolated up from native medical practice and were put into writing. Two manuscripts in particular fall into this category of popular medicine and formed the basis of M. L. Cameron’s recent study on the rationality of Anglo-Saxon medical practice (*Anglo-Saxon Medicine*). The *Leechbook* (MS Royal 12. D. XVII, ca. 950) and the *Lacnunga* (MS Harley 585, ca. 1050) reveal native Anglo-Saxon medicine as practiced although still mixed with classical and continental elements.

These texts are more practical and instructional in their organization and suggest some lay origins. The first two of the *Leechbook*’s three books are arranged, respectively, from head to foot and into internal and external diseases, while the third book is different in character, containing more of the Christian-folk amalgamations of interest here. Each of the books has a table of contents for easy reference. The first two books are properly called *Bald’s Leechbook*, according to the end of Book *II* where Bald commissioned Cild to complete the manuscript, suggesting private ownership (fol. 109a). These first two books of the manuscript may be a copy of a text from 50 years earlier, circa 900. However, the compiler may have copied the differently organized third book from a different source or sources. All three books are in the same hand, which N. R. Ker [*Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo Saxon*, ed. N. R. Ker (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957)] identified with the Winchester scriptorium (Cameron treats the third book as a separate text from *Bald’s Leechbook*). The *Lacnunga* groups remedies for the same ailment in a fashion similar to the *Leechbook III*, without the same overall design found in *Leechbook I* and *II*” (106).

³⁶ Meany, “The Anglo-Saxon View of the Causes of Illness” (see note 6), 20.

be treated by an all-purpose remedy combining herbs with liturgical elements. Thus, the afflictions experienced by demoniacs and those suffering from more benign afflictions of “devilsickness,” “moon-madness,” “frenzy,” and other such ailments of uncertain pathology receive overlapping treatments. A plant named rudmolin figures in a few examples, and those keeping this plant with them and placing it under the bed and over the door will be protected from both “the enemy’s temptations” (“*feondes costunge*”)³⁷ and also from the devil, who “will not harm you inside or outside” (“*þe deoful sceþpan inne ne ute*”). Thrice in the later stages of *Leechbook III*, treatments for affliction at the hands of the devil are described as equally beneficial for some slightly more benign influence, as in those who associate with the devil (i.e., “the elvish race,” “nightgoers,” those with whom the devil has relations, or the devil’s temptations), and for more vaguely defined conditions less attributable to demonic influence but still suggestive of psychic imbalance (i.e., “madness,” [*ungemynde*], “moon madness” [*monabseoc*], and “frenzy” [*wedenheorte*]).

Given the various treatments for afflictions caused by elves, devils, or devilish influences, and the field of ailments less attributable to anthropomorphized causes, *Leechbook III* reflects an intermediary moment in a larger process by which traditional, pre-Christian medicine was appropriated to the ends of the Church through the gradual attribution of illness to demonic influence, and the gradual inclusion of prayer, ritual, the making of Christian signs, and other liturgical elements. The best demonstration of the syncretic character of Book *III* is found in Chapter 62, a lengthy and elaborate series of remedies for elf-sickness, all of which require that the healer repeat benedictions and Pater Nosters,³⁸ sing masses, harvest dwarf elder according to an elaborately prescribed series of steps, prepare it as a medicinal drink while saying additional prayers, all the while judging a patient’s condition according to clearly explained symptoms

³⁷ Meany, “The Anglo-Saxon View of the Causes of Illness” (see note 6), offers a useful clarification of this term: “Cockayne and the new *Dictionary of Old English* translate *costunga* here as ‘temptations,’ but the remedies suggested under this heading so resemble those for devil-sickness cited above that surely *costunga* must here mean something like ‘afflictions, tribulations, torments,’ and equivalent to madness, epilepsy, or perhaps senile dementia (Alzheimer’s disease)” (17–18). In a footnote on these points she explains further: “[t]he meaning ‘to try (someone) with afflictions’ is established for the verbs (*ge*)*costian*, (*ge*)*costinan* ..., and ‘tried with afflictions’ for (*ge*)*costnod*. (*Ge*)*costing*, *costnung* translates *tribulatio* in biblical texts, and appears to bear the meaning ‘affliction’ in some citations ...” (see note 39, 29).

³⁸ In addition to its liturgical functions, this element of the ritual was thought to provide a means of timing, either to enable ingredients to combine properly, or to determine proper length of application, to enable the medicine to achieve maximum effectiveness.

and postures. Notably, the instructions conclude by reassuring the healer that “[t]his art has power against each temptation of the enemy” (“*bes cræft mæg wiþ ælcre feondes costunge*”). In beginning as treatments for elf-shot and ending as a means to ward off “the enemy’s” temptations, the account confirms that melding of Germanic pagan and Christian motifs that took place as Saxon healers ministered to a gradually Christianizing population.

Best known for the “Nine Herbs Charm” discussed above, the *Lacnunga* also depicts a rich blending of Germanic healing charm, prayer, herbal remedy, and liturgical ceremonialism throughout its rambling list of 194 remedies, recipes, and treatments. Though absent any specific allusion to devil-sickness, eight of the healing remedies make reference to devils, one of which equates it with elf-siden, or injury at the hands of malevolent elves. One is a poetic prayer of pagan origins to be offered by one suffering from a spear-wound (“Out Little Spear” – Chapter 135), speaking directly to the agent of the affliction. Another, a “holy drink against elf-siden” (Chapter 29)³⁹ and “all temptations of the devil” (“*þis is se halga drænc wið ælfsidene 7 wið eallum feondes costungum*”), calls for a series of herbs, including cristella, disma, zedoary, hassock, and fennel washed in water and then combined with “blessed wine” (“*gehalgodes wines*”), which is then blessed with a series of masses and prayers before being administered to the patient. Infusing heavy doses of Christianized ritual into a remedy for an affliction of Germanic pagan origins, this example likewise illustrates the gradual melding of medical traditions for a population whose spirituality was undergoing a slow transformation. Other examples include elements of Christian iconography, prayer, and liturgy in treatments to relieve toothache (Chapter 22) and black blains (25), to eliminate worms (26), to protect against the presumably harmful exposure to dwarves (88 and 93), to protect against eruptions and blains (95), and against afflictions to livestock (142, 158) and horses (161, 164, 176), and finally to cure eye pain (159), tooth pain (166), diarrhea (168), infertility (168), swellings (173), headache (178), wens (183), and even the plague (190). The final five chapters of the *Lacnunga* are devoted to various blessings which summon the healing powers of specific plants, vegetables, and ointments.

The most overtly Christianized elements of the *Lacnunga* emerge in Chapter 63, where a recipe for a holy salve names no less than 58 individual herbal ingredients, organized to enhance the alliterative character of the list as a whole.

³⁹ These terms are taken from the translation provided by Pollington, *Leechcraft: Early English Charms, Plantlore, and Healing* (see note 2). Grattan and Singer, *Anglo-Saxon Magic and Medicine: Illustrated Specially from the Semi-Pagan Text ‘Lacnunga’* (see note 2) use the alternative terms “elfin enchantment” and “Fiend” (109–10).

These are combined with butter from a cow “of one color” that is placed into a bowl, into which one positions a four-pronged stick. The name of one the four apostles, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, is then written upon each prong. Using this newly sanctified stick to stir the butter, the healer sings a combination of prayers, psalms, and gibberish words. This salve is then applied over the patient’s body, the parts of which are repeated in Latin, “so that the devil may have no power over him” (*“ut non nabeat postetatem diabolus”*). Thus begins a section in which a series of prayers follow, each confirming the supplicant’s humility and requesting the Lord’s help in resisting the Devil’s temptations. The series concludes with a Latin prayer termed by Grattan and Singer as the “Lorica of Gildas,” which again asks for God’s protection over each individually named part of the male body. Just as an invocation of this alliterative list of herbal remedies, spoken within a ritual context, would seem calculated to enhance their collective healing potential, so does it seem feasible that the act of speaking the names of each part of the anatomy likewise intensified the healer’s efforts to seek God’s protections for warding off afflictions to the body as a whole.

One noteworthy example that also demonstrates this component of oral ritual is found in a remedy for headache and for pains in the limbs appears in Chapter 31 of the *Lacnunga*. Termed by Grattan and Singer as “A Very Complex Prescription,” this chapter features a recipe calling for equal amounts of 36 separate herbs, pounded together and combined with eight distinct parts of different trees (including berries, bark, and leaves); a complicated series of steps follows, including instructions to combine the mixture with wine and various kinds of grease, then with butter; then it is reduced and left to simmer, and then combined with garlic and a series of other (to the modern eye, seemingly random) ingredients as it is prepared for application; finally, prayers are sung over the mixture as it is applied to the patient. This particular example suggests that, if official Church-sanctioned healing ritual survives in the textual records of the herbals then the legacy of popular healing practices can also be verified by considering the evidence of improvisational, preliterate, spoken elements in these same texts. Moreover, select sets of instructions throughout the *Lacnunga*’s Chapter 31, like those in other comparably detailed chapters, would be hard to enact at a literal level, if not for the paucity of healing ingredients, then in combining all the listed elements in exact textual order and sequence.

Therefore, we must conclude that most healers working both within and outside of Church influence likely faced a need for some degree of creative substitution. In this way, some degree of spontaneous improvisation can be imagined according to the availability of ingredients and the need to perform “extra-textual” rites according to socially determined contexts. If such occasion-specific improvisation can be imagined to achieve the desired result, then this form of

ritual remedy also reflects the influence of native, possibly preliterate cultural influences. In this way, modern readers discern varying levels of “textuality” and “literality” in herbal treatments by considering the feasibility of enacting a ritual as a literal, step-by-step practice described textually according to the specific instructional directives of the *Lacnunga* (and to varying degrees, the other herbals), versus those suggesting a more spontaneous approach to enacting the ritual, one likelier practiced outside of monastic environs.

In judging the levels of textuality of a given ritual, important distinctions become evident between preliterate knowledge, or a knowledge embedded in orality and context-specific communal ritual, and literate knowledge, one rooted in literacy and in connections to inherited traditions preserved in record. In its own way and according to the provenance of each, the herbals collectively reflect the interplay between the formal and popular traditions, hinting at levels of performativity implied within given ritual, and expressed in the icons, invocations, acts of administering and applying, communal participation, and other measures undertaken to ward off evil.

In the *Lacnunga* that convergence of liturgical and popular influences, apparent first in the aforementioned remedy for “elf-siden,” is equally evident in a salve made from a relatively few ingredients, over which a mass is sung, that serves as a remedy for “flying venom” (“*fleogendan attre*”) and “sudden eruption” (“*færspryngum*”). Another treatment for the same affliction requires a series of gestures with an oak spear as Latin prayers to Christ and the Apostles are invoked against “all evil and vileness” (“*ab omnibus insidiis inimici*”). Finally, a prayer to Woden (Chapter 80) offers “nine spikes against nine poisons,” representing another prayer of Germanic origins that asserts the power of “chervil and fennel” which, with nine other unnamed plants, provide protection “against nine powerful diseases / against nine poisons and against nine infections.”⁴⁰ Collectively, these examples are calculated to strengthen the patient’s capacity against vaguely defined poisons and venoms according to prayers, charms, and incantations imperfectly preserved in the text which nevertheless show the continuing influence of that native culture in remedies that conjoin elements of Christianity and native paganism in reflecting select stages of a culture in slow transition.

Reflecting neither the pre-Christian popular beliefs captured in the condition and treatments for “elf-shot” (treated by elaborate, specialized remedies conjoin-

⁴⁰ Grattan and Singer, *Anglo-Saxon Magic and Medicine: Illustrated Specially from the Semi-Pagan Text ‘Lacnunga’* (see note 2), offer a less specific translation “against nine spirits of evil / against nine venoms and against nine onfliers” (“*wið nyȝon wuldorȝefleogenum/ wið viii attrum 7 wið nyȝon onflyȝum*”).

ing herbs, ritual, and invasive needle-pricking), nor the equally powerful exorcising capacities summoned by Church-sponsored caretakers serving the recently converted, this third category of affliction itself occupies a middle ground of sorts. Conditions such as “elf-shot,” long seen by traditional Anglo-Saxon scholars to reside in the realm of superstition, appear beside the more generalized afflictions caused by “evil” influences – charms, spells, vaguely understood presences, or the “evil eye” – even though these latter conditions can be classed in an overlapping but distinct category.

Despite the treatment taken from Chapter 41 of *Leechbook II*, to be administered “if evil temptation comes to a man or elves or nightgoers” (“*Gif men hwilc yfel costung weorpe oppe ælf oppe nihtgengan*”), the semantic connections between the Old English word “evil” (*yfel*) with the pre-Christian notion of the “elf” (*ælf*, *ylf*), deserve fuller study to establish whether this pagan conception of evil connects philologically with the afflictions of “elf-shot,” “elf-sickness,” “elf-siden,” and the various other threats posed by other anthropomorphized bad actors.

Finally, the notion that the early Anglo-Saxon healer’s role was to isolate and then banish an invasive intruder into the body aligns with the shaman traditions across the boreal forests to above the Arctic which likewise conceive of the cause of illness as an invasion of a spirit, sometimes associated with the dead, into a patient’s body. The shaman’s work is to identify this spiritual cause and then to fabricate an appropriate strategy to extirpate, drive out, or otherwise eliminate the spirit’s presence in the body of the patient by using a combination of ritual and herbal components.

Anthropologist Ake Hultkrantz explains this role, noting that “in Native American thought health and medicine are part of the religious interpretation of the human situation,” so that “health signifies a harmony and balance between the human and the supernatural world.”⁴¹ In this way, the elimination of a toxic spirit brings a return of health, an effort made imperative because individual’s health is tied to the larger concerns and conditions of the community which in turn influences and is invested in the health of its individual members. Summarizing this particular aspect of the Navajo cultures of the American Southwest, Hultkrantz describes how healing rituals assume both personal and public dimensions and are practiced to restore afflicted patients to *hozho*, or “the beautiful, pleasant, and healthy environment including the universe and existence.” In such an environment,

⁴¹ Hultkrantz, *Shamanic Healing and Ritual Drama: Health and Medicine in Native North American Religious Traditions* (New York: Crossroad Press, 1992), 15.

[t]he health of the human being is thus not an isolated case; it is a matter of the whole universe. By contributing to the upkeep of beauty, and by having it restored when it becomes lost in individual cases, each man and woman work for the universe at large and its basic order.⁴²

One subset of ritual healing exercises, the “Evilway ceremonies,” align with aspects of Saxon treatments for evil conditions and influences. Performed after a patient has “become afflicted by evil powers, usually sent by malevolent supernatural beings,” Hultkrantz explains how “the curing ritual here is therefore not so much concerned with a restitution of disturbed order but with the removal of the pathogenic power from the patient’s body.”⁴³

As suggested in the various senses of evil expressed in Old English – *yfele*, *lað*, *atelic*, *malscra*,⁴⁴ etc. – we note a comparable idea of evil as a slightly milder pre-Christian conception that, though still pernicious, was treatable by joining medicine with remedial and ritualistic process, also to remove invasive and pernicious afflictions from the patient’s body. As in the various healing rituals described by Hultkrantz, here also the herbals treat “evil” with syncretic approaches to healing that were based in the belief of the healing powers of herbs, faith, and ritual, administered in proper proportion and according to context to restore health to patients and wholeness to the localities they inhabited. In treatments for evil within Anglo-Saxon herbals we therefore see hints of an alignment with that “intrusion theory of disease”⁴⁵ shown by the Navajo and their more northern progenitors, implying no cultural connection but rather underscoring the universality of this preliterate and pre-Christian notion of evil as an ever-present and often intrusive agent of disease that was remedied by combining myth, medicine, and ritual to restore both individual and communal health.

As textual records of healing practices, the herbals also figure within a larger tension and interplay between preliterate pagan and Christian beliefs as reflected within more “literary” forms – in *Beowulf*, *The Dream of the Rood*, *The Wanderer* and *The Seafarer*, to list the most noteworthy examples—and in the suspicion and accommodation toward native practices shown by those writing within the Anglo-Saxon monastic tradition. Emerging from the traditions of the Old Testa-

⁴² Hultkrantz, *Shamanic Healing and Ritual Drama* (see note 41), 129.

⁴³ Hultkrantz, *Shamanic Healing and Ritual Drama* (see note 41), 136.

⁴⁴ Meany, “The Anglo-Saxon View of the Causes of Illness” (see note 6), discusses this term in relation to the Old Saxon word *malsc* and the Old High German word *mascrunc*, in senses suggesting excessive praise or envy, in ways that serve as “evidence that the concept of the evil eye was known in late Anglo-Saxon England” (23).

⁴⁵ Hultkrantz, *Shamanic Healing and Ritual Drama* (see note 41), 136.

ment, this idea of evil is cast primarily in transgressive terms in its earliest mentions in the primeval portions of Genesis 2 and 3, gradually assuming tangible forms as something committed “in the sight of the Lord” to arouse His anger, as a corrosive presence indicating a community’s collective failures, or as a revelation of their compromised faith. Evil is ever-present, and so the Israelites are mandated eternally to guard against it and collectively purge it from their midst. In Proverbs, evil also assumes varied forms as a pathway travelled, or as something feared and avoided as an expression of a higher Godliness.

However, New Testament Christianity introduced a dichotomizing habit which amplified these more ambiguous and elusive notions of evil as expressed in the Old Testament. The habit of viewing evil as the starkly polar opposite of good becomes more pronounced as shown in Matthew 12:35. Here the verses “A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him,” echoed in Luke 6:45, confirm the essentially bipartite habits in the early ecclesiastical world view that stand at variance with less defined conceits of evil as suggested in the Old Testament and also within Germanic traditions resonating in the herbal healing guides.

Dendle writes of the transformative role served by Jesus Christ, whose healing functions identified him as a “qualitatively new divine presence” who represented an “unprecedented, publicly acknowledged challenge to the forces of evil.”⁴⁶ In the New Testament, the emergence of a personified presence of the “evil one,” referenced in the Books of Matthew and John and invoked to explain threats to communal well-being, also represents the early stages of an evolving demonology.

As explained in *Confessions* (ca. 400 C.E.), St. Augustine conveys an idea of evil that only amplifies these conceits. In depicting his movement beyond Manicheanism, he recounts his enslavement to various “devils” in Books *II* and *III*. For example, in Book *III* chapters 6-7, when addressing God in supplicant thanks, he reveals how the Lord had rescued him from “the beguiling service of devils, to whom (he had) sacrificed (his) evil actions” (“obsequie daemoniorum, quibus immolabam facta mea mala”).⁴⁷ A bit later we also see perhaps an evolution of the

⁴⁶ Dendle, *Demon Possession in Anglo-Saxon England*, (see note 16), 54.

⁴⁷ *The Confessions of Saint Augustine*, Book *III* ch. 3 (last accessed Dec. 13, 2015 via <https://ryanfb.github.io/loebolus-data/L026.pdf>) 106. Trans. Edward Bouverie Pusey (last accessed Dec. 13, 2015 via <http://sparks.eserver.org/books/augustineconfess.pdf>), 20. Henry Chadwick (Saint Augustine: *Confessions*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991); translates this passage as part of “...a sacrilegious quest for knowledge ...” which led the young supplicant “... down to faithless depths and fraudulent service of devils. The sacrifices I offered them were my evil acts” (37).

“oculus malus,” the “evil eye” first suggested in Pliny’s *Natural History*.⁴⁸ Inquiring about the nature of evil as a process of the mind’s seduction by demonic conceit, Augustine considers “those fantasies by which our eyes deceive our mind” (“illa falsa animo decepto per oculos”).⁴⁹ Here he recounts his descent into lust and depravity while succumbing to the temptations of rhetoric, of pleasure, and of the flesh. The late seventh/early eighth-century Latin *Liber Scintillarum* makes overt reference to the “oculus malus,” which is glossed in Old English in BL Royal MS 7 CIV as “Unclænnysse eage yfel.”⁵⁰

Other continental examples of this growing dichotomizing habit are expressed first in the *Rule of St. Benedict* of the early sixth century, a work which influenced Gregory the Great’s *Pastoral Care* (ca. 590). Here, the difference between good and evil is crucial to Gregory’s rhetoric and his interpretation of scripture as he articulates his visions of fit ecclesiastical leadership, service, duty, and the avoidance of vice. Healing and medicine served as both practical expressions and spiritual idioms within this monastic mindset, which tolerantly accommodated itself to the healing directives of pre-Christian medical practice.

Alain Touwaide argues that within early Christian monastic thinking, disease was a “trial sent by God to test human faith or a punishment for deviant behavior,” and so the medicinal properties used for treatment were God’s gifts and contained divine healing powers best not scrutinized by human minds and eyes. In this way, early Christian monastic healers rewrote Greek and Roman medical texts in ways that demonized disease and elevated the healer’s art into a spiritualized quest. Despite this limitation classical medicine “was considered by the early Christians as the most successful achievement of pagan philosophy” and was therefore “submitted to a screening aimed at preserving the elements seen as most compatible with the new religion” so that the Hippocratic spirit was preserved as were the best elements of Dioscoridean and Galenic practice.⁵¹

The idea of evil in conjoined pagan and Christian terms, as a vague but increasingly demonic presence is shown in the eighth-century Old High German “Wessobrunn Creation and Prayer.” Appearing within the larger and multifaceted work, the *Wessobrunner Gebet*, this short prayer opens with elements of ambiguous origins – “trees, mountains, the earth or sky – (which) have been interpreted

48 See note 27, above.

49 Chadwick (*Confessions* [see note 47]) translates this passage as “the false mythologies by which use the eyes to deceive the mind” (41).

50 See OED, “evil eye” (last accessed Dec. 14, 2015 online at: <http://www.oed.com.ezproxy.mtsu.edu/view/Entry/65386?redirectedFrom=evil+eye#eid5149946>).

51 Alain Touwaide, “The Legacy of Classical Antiquity in Byzantium and the West,” *Health and Healing from the Medieval Garden* (see note 1), 15–28; here 19.

as objects of Germanic worship" – and offers the supplicant's desire "to withstand devils / and to avoid evil / the Evil One / and to work Thy will" ("enti craft tiuflun za uuidarstantanne /enti arc za piuuisanne enti dinau uuilleon za gauurchanne").⁵² Elsewhere in the Old High German tradition, the *Basler Rezepte*, or the Basel Prescriptions, offer medicines which in their brevity provide slight hints of cultural affiliation with the Anglo-Saxon herbals. However, other evidence of pre-Christian resonance within the Germanic herbals is rare and so sheds scant light on the topic at hand. The German *Arzneibücher* include elements of a document called the Zürich pharmacopoeia, and another herbal, the Innsbruck pharmacopoeia, contains collected herbal recipes and charms; but sufficient amounts of both texts exist in Latin to convey the sense that these are more reflective of monastic than of pre-Christian Germanic traditions, so that "even to refer to these texts as German is not strictly accurate"⁵³

Within continental traditions, the dichotomizing habit of early Christian rhetoric thus seems largely to mute the pre-Christian expression of a less demonic, more vaguely defined idea of evil. In contrast, within the Anglo-Saxon tradition that more elusive idea of evil persists. In exegetical contexts, references to evil appear in customary ways, implying moral depravity, wickedness, ill intent, or bad deeds, in sources as diverse as the *Lindisfarne Gospels*, the *Blickling Homilies*, in the many translations of the vulgate Gospels into Anglo-Saxon, and in the *Vespasian Psalter*. However, hints of this vaguer conceit of evil also appear, for instance, in King Alfred's translation of Gregory's *Pastoral Care*,⁵⁴ which makes reference to "yfelum weorcum,"⁵⁵ "yfel doð,"⁵⁶ and the "yfelum willan."⁵⁷ References to conceits of evil that combine and conjoin Christian and Germanic pagan senses of the term are found more directly throughout *Beowulf*, as best shown in

⁵² Old High German full text and English translation and quote by Christopher Wells, "The Shorter German Verse Texts," *German Literature of the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Brian Murdoch. The Camden House History of German Literature, 2. (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2004), 157–200; here 161–63.

⁵³ Brian Murdoch, "Charms, Recipes, and Prayers" (see note 52), 57–72; here 60; see also Murdoch 59–61 for a discussion of the problematic aspects of interpreting various pre-Christian Old German charms within larger healing contexts; here he points to a "comfortingly mysterious obscurity" as "a relevant feature of the charm as such" (61).

⁵⁴ *King Alfred's West-Saxon Version of Gregory's Pastoral Care with an English Translation*, ed. Henry Sweet (London: Early English Text Society, 1871) (last accessed via Google Books on Dec. 14, 2015).

⁵⁵ *King Alfred's West-Saxon Version of Gregory's Pastoral Care* (see note 54), 39 and 267.

⁵⁶ *King Alfred's West-Saxon Version of Gregory's Pastoral Care* (see note 54), 15, 20, and 21.

⁵⁷ *King Alfred's West-Saxon Version of Gregory's Pastoral Care* (see note 54), 157.

Grendel's introduction in lines 102-113. As "Caine's cynne" he shares a dubious progeny with

eotenas ond ylfe and orcneas,
 swylche gigantas, þa wið Gode wunnon
 lange brage; he him ðæs lean forgeald.
 (ogres and elves and evil phantoms
 And the giants too who stove with God
 Time and gain until He gave them their reward).⁵⁸

Meanwhile, two "deofla" also merit brief mention within the poem (lines 756 and 1680) alongside a single "leodscaðan" ("public scourge" or "public enemy") and various "feonda" (fiends); and when recounting his victorious conquest, Beowulf uses the term "deofles cræftum" (line 2088) when describing Grendel's furious attempts to devour him. While the monsters in *Beowulf* are certainly demonized at key points, the sense that their menace assumes other dimensions also pervades the poem throughout.

Beowulf's triumph over a public threat that is described in turns as demonic and as only slightly more benign provides an appropriate avenue toward conclusion. In studying the treatments for "evil" afflictions prescribed in the herbals, we might reconstruct aspects of the climate where these tensions between official and native were negotiated and resolved, thus uncovering an underlying logic for these tenth- and eleventh-century medical practices. Intangible and elusive to practical diagnosis, the condition of being under an evil spell or charm perhaps has analogues in today's medical climate, where officially recognized afflictions like "Failure to Thrive," "Chronic Fatigue Syndrome," "Borderline Personality Disorder," and "Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder" might be seen as comparably vexing conditions of uncertain origins which likewise challenge the diagnostic efforts of today's healers in their many symptoms, pathologies, and disparate, occasionally ritualistic options for treatment. We read of "evil" in the Anglo-Saxon herbals as something neither overtly elvish nor overtly demonic, but a malevolent force that contains elements of both. But any effort to treat "evil" is also suggestive of a physiological ailment or neurological affliction, or perhaps a vaguely defined psychological abstraction, and thus we see "evil" as a comparable "catch-all" category for those diseases that offered fewer or inconsistent pathological clues to the Anglo-Saxon healer and were therefore harder to pin-

⁵⁸ Translation by Seamus Heaney, *Beowulf: A New Verse Translation* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2001).

point. And this elusive “catch all” category of affliction required a ramping up of treatment, including a combination of elements of native and liturgical ritual and herbal remedy to achieve two interconnected goals: heightening the status of healers and repositioning patients within their immediate communities.

Connected through liturgy and ritual to their mythic medical and spiritual forbearers, these healers were likewise able to use the healing potencies of herbs they administered to inspire patients, elevating the afflicted from states of beholdenness to those “evils” that threatened their health, to places where their capacities to resist those threats were strengthened by re-inscribing their bonds to community and to faith traditions. Derived from established healing practices of Mediterranean origin, from the native traditions embedded in the extant Anglo-Saxon herbals, and from other ritualistic processes aimed at these abstract and universal threats, the means to heal afflictions from various vaguely defined “evils” rested upon these foundations.

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Bald's *Leechbook* and the Construction of Male Health in Anglo-Saxon England

Examining a series of books reflecting areas of study that he might pursue, Dr. Faustus in Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus* (1592), holding a copy of the writings of Galen, quotes a Greek maxim from the text and then translates, "The end of physic is our body's health."¹ To members of the audience in the Renaissance theater, that would have been understood as a commonplace idea, and no doubt patients have always consulted with doctors believing they could assist their patients to that end. That certainly must have been the case in earlier periods as well. From what we know about medicine in Anglo-Saxon England from sources such as Bede's writing to those from the time of the Conquest in 1066, we may assume medieval patients thought the same. We know that people sought out doctors even from a reference to a doctor's removing a tumor from the saint's neck in *Ælfric's Life of Æthelthryth* (ca. 996–997).² From the evidence of medical texts, it seems apparent that some of the remedies deal with male-specific challenges to the body's health.

What seems particularly noteworthy in our context is not the transmission of Latin texts into Anglo-Saxon England from the time of Bede (d. 735) onwards, but a very rich and valuable vernacular English tradition that attempted to provide assistance to doctors and their patients after the reign of Alfred the Great in the ninth century. Being written in the vernacular suggests that that corpus of medical tracts would have been accessible to a wider group of medical practitioners. Analyzing these texts, J. H. G. Grattan and Charles Singer were rather dismissive in their assessment of early medieval medicine, remarking: "Survey the mass of folly and credulity that makes up Anglo-Saxon leechdoms, it may be asked: 'Is there any rational element here? Is the material based on anything that we may reasonably describe as experience?'"³

¹ Christopher Marlowe, *Doctor Faustus*, "The Plays of Christopher Marlowe", ed. Roma Gill (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1979).

² Claire A. Lees, "Engendering Religious Desire: Sex, Knowledge, and Christian Identity in Anglo-Saxon England," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 27.1 (1997): 17–46.

³ J. H. G. Grattan and Charles Singer, *Anglo-Saxon Magic and Medicine: Illustrated Specially from the Semi-Pagan Text 'Lacnunga'* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1952), 92.

Daniel F. Pigg, The University of Tennessee at Martin

M. L. Cameron in *Anglo-Saxon Medicine* reopened the investigation with a study that shows a great deal of subtlety and ingenuity in these vernacular medical texts of Anglo-Saxon England. He even suggests the modern viability of some of the cures.⁴ Scholars have varied in their analysis of the efficacy of these. For instance, Barbara Brennessel, Michael D. C. Drout, and Robyn Gravel attempted to reproduce some of the remedies of Bald's *Leechbook* with less than satisfactory results, but in 2015, Freda Harrison, a microbiologist at the University of Nottingham, with the assistance of Old English scholar Christiana Lee, in clinical trials have again raised the possibility that these cures may have modern usage with stubborn staff viruses.⁵

Whatever the case may be, for Anglo-Saxon England, the monastery gardens and herbals provided, together with an intricate series of trade networks and routes as noted in medieval correspondences, important medical treatments for a world that was awaiting cure.⁶ People may certainly have been treated in their homes, but Linda E. Voigts has discovered treatments being administered in Benedictine houses or other ecclesiastical settings, using Rule 36 in the order's manual of procedure.⁷ Perhaps it is best to remember that "medicine was a part of the Christian mission," whether we are talking about copying remedies suggested in classical age manuscripts or applying those remedies in a medical setting.⁸ As

⁴ M. L. Cameron, *Anglo-Saxon Medicine*. Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England, 7 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993). This is by far the most exhaustive study of Anglo-Saxon medicine, based on medical texts and external evidence.

⁵ Barbara Brennessel, Michael D. C. Drout, and Robyn Gravel, "A Reassessment of the Efficacy of Anglo-Saxon Medicine," *Anglo-Saxon World* 34 (2005): 183–95; Clare Wilson, "Anglo-Saxon Remedy Kills Hospital Superbug MSRA," *New Scientist*, 30 March 2015, retrieved from <https://www.newscientist.com/article/dn27263> (last accessed on Jan. 14, 2016).

⁶ Brennessel, Drout, and Gravel, "A Reassessment" (see note 5).

⁷ Linda E. Voigts, "Anglo-Saxon Plant Remedies and the Anglo-Saxons," *Isis* 70.2 (June 1979): 250–68.

⁸ Faye Marie Getz, *Medicine in the English Middle Ages* (Princeton, NJ, and London: Princeton University Press, 1998), 46–47. For the most comprehensive work on early medieval medicine, see M. L. Cameron, *Anglo-Saxon Medicine* (see note 4). His work is actually the most affirmative about early medieval English medicine. The earliest sources include, for instance, the following: Henry S. Wellcome, "Anglo-Saxon Leechcraft: An Historical Sketch of Early Modern Medicine. London: Burroughs Wellcome, 1912), retrieved from <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/uc2.ark:/13960/t80k28ros> (last accessed on Jan. 14, 2016); and J. H. G. Grattan and Charles Singer, *Anglo-Saxon Magic and Medicine: Illustrated Specially from the Semi-Pagan Text 'Lacnunga'* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1952). This essay examines the work of Linda Voigt (see note 7) and Brennessel, Drout, and Gravel (see note 5). What seems clear is that the earliest scholarship was more influenced by positivist thinking that focused on the notion of modern progress over

we will see, part of that mission too would be focused on cures that specifically relate to the gendered norms of masculinity.

Bald's *Leechbook*, dating from the time of King Alfred in the ninth century and existing in a tenth-century manuscript, is the earliest vernacular medical text available from Western Europe.⁹ This tripartite document provides us with a great deal of important information about the perceptions of health and wellness during the late Anglo-Saxon period. Clearly a translation and a compendium of medical remedies from the classical world, it also contains a good deal of information about remedies that developed in northern Europe, at times contrasting northern European and southern European cures. There are three treaties combined in the manuscript (British Library, Royal 12 D xvii).¹⁰

The present study focuses on the first two parts of the *Leechbook*, the ones that show the greatest evidence of blending classical and northern European cures. While there is much attention to treatments of illnesses that are not gender-specific, there are a number of remedies for health issues that are specifically male. While we must be tentative, it would seem that Bald's *Leechbook* follows more the theories of gender ascribed to Galen than to Aristotle.¹¹ Our modern perception may be that early medieval medicine was not gender-specific or gender-sensitive, but the writer of Bald's *Leechbook* shows a keen awareness that men, women, and children respond differently to medical treatment, thus providing for differentiated understanding of health needs. Apparently, the *Leechbook* had a rather significant amount of material of a gynecological nature, but some has been lost. Some parts that survive in the manuscript consider birthing and afterbirth care.¹² In the section of Book I dealing with bodily paralysis, the writer notes,

Do þu ða læcedomas spilce þu þa lichoman ȝesie. For þon ðe micel ȝedal is on pærnedes ond piper ond cilder lichoman. And on þam mæzene þæs dæȝhpamlican pyrtan ond þær idlan þær ealdan ond þær ȝeoȝan ond þær þe sie ȝepin þropunȝum ond þer þe sie unȝpuna spelcum þinȝum.

medieval practice, while more recent research takes the contributions seriously within their social and medical contexts.

⁹ All textual references to Bald's *Leechbook* are to this edition: *Leechdoms, Wortcunning, and Starcraft*, trans. and ed. Oswald Cockayne (London: Longman, 1865). I have also included his translations from the Old English text.

¹⁰ For a study of the history and forms of compilation in this unique manuscript, see Richard Scott Nokes, "The Several Compilers of Bald's *Leechbook*," *Anglo-Saxon England* 33 (2004): 51–76.

¹¹ Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press, 1990), 40–43.

¹² Cameron, *Anglo Saxon Medicine* (see note 4). 174–84.

[Apply the leechdoms as you see the state of the body. For there are great differences in the bodies of a man, a woman, and a child; and in the constitution of a daily laborer and of the idle, of the old and of the young, of him who is accustomed to endurance, and him who is unaccustomed to such things.^{13]}]

The writer does not tell the doctor how to make those decisions, but that he – and perhaps she – must make those deliberative judgments. In one sense, those determinations would be self-evident, but the amount of medication used would clearly differ. As M. L. Cameron has noted, Bald's *Leechbook* assumes a level of professionalism will be used by those who apply the remedies.¹⁴

Clearly, medical remedies or treatments develop from necessity, and they give us an index into the particular challenges of maleness, for instance. From literary texts of the period, we know that maleness is often presented in very essentialist ways that are specifically related to the understanding of “biology as destiny.”¹⁵ Remedies that relate to unique health challenges for males – what “biology as destiny” suggests – tell us a great deal about the implicit understanding of the male in the social order, even the inheritance of ideas from Greco-Roman civilization that emphasizes masculinity as a balance of public perceptions and performance as well as a carefully regulated sexual performance that maintained the balance of bodily humors and did not exhaust the natural heat of the male with over indulgence in sexual activity.¹⁶ What the remedies cannot tell us is exactly who the recipients of the treatments were. Medical cures cross social and gender boundaries.

The classical-antique world passed on a great number of ideas about remedies for various illnesses, and it also brought forward quite a number of ideas about gender that underlie the treatment; in fact, the very ideas about gender and its domestic and social presentation are presumed in those treatments. As this essay contends, particularly for men a good deal of what it meant to be healthy was the regulation of heat in the body. As Joan Cadden has noted, heat

was one of the most fundamental factors in the distinction between males and females. It has a place in pharmacology, astrology, and in ideas about the production of semen. It

¹³ Cockayne, *Leechdoms, Wortcunning, and Starcraft* (see note 9), 84–85.

¹⁴ Cameron, *Anglo-Saxon Medicine* (see note 4), 1–4.

¹⁵ Joyce E. Salisbury, “Gendered Sexuality,” *Handbook of Medieval Sexuality*, ed. Vern L. Bullough and James A. Brundage. Garland Reference Library for the Humanities, 1696 (New York and London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1996), 81–89.

¹⁶ Joyce Salisbury, “Gendered Sexuality” (see note 15), 82–83.

operated as a basis for the conceptualization of the masculine and the feminine both within and beyond reproduction.¹⁷

Thus heat and health went together in the construction of masculinity.

This essay asserts that Bald's *Leechbook* provides insight into the social construction of masculinity in Anglo-Saxon England, particularly through its attention to those issues directly related to the production, control, and preservation of, and attempts at restoring heat in the body. By definition, if masculinity in reality is based on essentialist notions of gender, medical treatments may restore the health that would make such essentialism possible. In essence, if environmental factors, nature, war, labor, disease, violence, and the aging process destroyed aspects of male identity, medicine might have been used as a restorative. On balance, what seems more likely, however, is that the treatments are often palliative in nature, although patients were likely hoping for success. In that way, an examination of various remedies for maladies such as problems with mistiness of the eyes, wounds in certain parts of the body, sexual impotence or even aggressive amorous behavior, and other elements such as hair loss and restoration tell us a great deal about the desire to "fix" problems that are a part of that constructed image of masculinity, connected with bodily heat.

While no pieces of the imaginative literature of Anglo-Saxon England specifically mentions men seeking out a physician for male-specific health issues or other health issues for that matter, this unique medical compendium provides access to the mentalities and material practices that underlie medieval culture before the year 1000 in England.

From the perspective of modern pharmacology, some of the suggested remedies certainly seem practical; some are, of course, a blending of "medical science" and folklore with religious faith and ritual practices. That blending may tell us that some of the original practitioners were clergy. A study of Bald's *Leechbook* provides access to the early knowledge of health and wellness of Anglo-Saxon England, and in particular, it provides access to knowledge of male health. In literary texts, scholars often speak about the "performance of masculinity." In Bald's *Leechbook*, we find the desire of the medical community and male patients to meet the particular challenges of being male.

Before examining the text and its implications for male health, it seems prudent to provide a brief survey of the range of topics in Bald's *Leechbook* and

¹⁷ Joan Cadden, *The Meaning of Sex Differences in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 280.

the construction of medieval masculinity, particularly in its essentialist or biological perspective.

I Survey of Books I and II of Bald's *Leechbook*

Let's examine the overall contents of Books I and II. The range of maladies covered will likely surprise modern readers, for it suggests that human beings have been battling these issues for centuries, whether young or old, male or female. Book I announces that it will deal with remedies to the external body and is organized largely from head to toe. Book I covers areas such as head pains of different varieties, a host of eye and ear problems, neck pains, a minor surgical procedure for cleft lip, congestion, joint pain, swellings in various parts of the body, worms – a problem often seen as the root of many problems – bodily paralysis, shingles, smallpox, overindulgence in alcohol, and cures for the loss of voice.¹⁸

Readers can easily imagine that a variety of people might have experienced these problems, but they should also be aware that any group of warriors would likely have had a priest traveling with them who could not only offer mass, but could administer the kinds of remedies prescribed for these challenges. They used numerous herbal remedies, animal products, some amulets, and recourse to liturgical pieces such as the *Pater Noster*, Psalm 51, and/or the *Gloria*, often as time markers in the way that medications are to be administered.¹⁹ With respect to particular issues of men's health, we will come back particularly to the remedies for hair loss and over- and under-developed sexual desire as these tell us in particular about items central to male health and its social constructedness in Anglo-Saxon society. What seems clear is that the remedies are less connected with finding the larger problem behind them than with an attempt on the part of the doctor to meet the immediate needs of the patient. Sometimes those causes might be called 'flying venom,' but certain wounds would certainly result from the flight of javelins on the battle field or injuries that result from working with animals in agricultural settings or other injuries involving the world of work.

Book II considers the internal organs and their health. It is hard to miss that the liver is of central concern to the writer of this medical text, and as Cameron

18 For a discussion of some of these treatments, see the essay by Warren Tormey in this volume. While his study considers the concept of "evil" throughout the manuscript, his general commentary provides an excellent background to the kind of specifics, which my article considers. His method is more encyclopedic and mine more focused on three issues.

19 Cockayne, *Leechdoms, Wortcunning, and Starcraft*, (see note 9), 116–17.

notes, there was awareness that diet was connected to having a healthy liver.²⁰ Topics cover various diseases of the maw (mouth, throat, and gullet), the liver, the wamb (the belly), the spleen (milt), various diseases of the lungs – likely pleurisy – abdomen, and bowels. As with Book I, we find a mixture of classical and native European treatments. What Cameron has demonstrated is that seldom are the remedies simple translations of Latin texts, but they factor in the kinds of experiential learning which must have been the practice of medicine in the early Middle Ages.²¹

II Classical Antique to Early Medieval Theories of Masculinity

Before examining medical aspects of masculinity, we should first establish a basis for examining what it meant to be male in the Middle Ages. There is no single answer to this topic, for when cities and various forms of corporate life developed since the twelfth century, the definition changed.²² What seems prudent here is to posit the inheritance from a classical world while adding aspects of a developing nobility and peasant class.

Studies of masculinity in medieval contexts can be traced to the groundbreaking collection of essays entitled *Medieval Masculinities: Regarding Men in the Middle Ages*, which was edited by Clare A. Lees.²³ Growing out of feminist studies, the attention to masculinity in academic studies was to uncover the variety of maleness in the Middle Ages, rather than to reinforce the hegemonic paradigms of patriarchy from classical civilization. In his essay in the collection,

²⁰ Cameron, *Anglo-Saxon Medicine* (see note 4), 17–18, 44–45.

²¹ Cameron, *Anglo-Saxon Medicine* (see note 4), 83–90.

²² Social historians argue that masculinity, rather than being a fixed experience, is related to the time period and social class status. For an examination of masculinity within the system of apprenticeship in the late Middle Ages, see Christina M. Fitzgerald, *The Drama of Masculinity and Medieval English Guild Culture*. The New Middle Ages (New York: Palgrave McMillan, 2007); Ruth Mazo Karras, *From Boys to Men: Formations of Masculinity in Late Medieval Europe*. The Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003).

²³ *Medieval Masculinities: Regarding Men in the Middle Ages*, ed. Clare A. Lees. Medieval Cultures 7 (Minneapolis, MN, and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1994). This initial volume launched a significant field of study. For an examination of history and depth of this particular mode of scholarship, see Daniel Pigg, “Masculinity Studies,” *Handbook of Medieval Studies: Terms – Methods – Trends*, ed. Albrecht Classen (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2010), vol. 2, 829–35.

Vern L. Bullough suggests that masculinity is defined along both biological and social norms: “impregnating women, protecting dependents, and serving as a provider to one’s family.”²⁴ Further, he notes that males had to be particularly careful not to engage in behaviors that might be considered feminine such as lovesickness and that maleness was “somewhat fragile.”²⁵ As a general rule, readers will find little of the passions of love represented in Old English texts, apart from religious devotions. As Claire Lees once noted, “Anglo-Saxon England is not a promising place to think about sex.”²⁶ One could certainly argue that the longings of the female speaker in the “Wife’s Lament,” when she thinks of other lovers lying in bed as happier than she is represents sexual desire, but it is restricted in that case to a woman. The poem merely reinforces sexual desire in the feminine, thus affirming ideas held in patriarchal and theological beliefs. We have no idea if her husband, wherever he was, experienced that same kind of love longing. If he did, this could have undermined his sense of masculine identity.

Adding to these explorations into maleness in the medieval world, Jacqueline Murray observes that, while males certainly had strong sexual desires, it was actually the female whose desires were more suspect as they could lure the male into amorous behavior. Further, there was a contradiction derived from classical age medicine that suggested that “moderate sexual intercourse promoted men’s health, while another represented by Epicurus, believed sexual abstinence was preferable.”²⁷ These are clearly related to biological essentialism. The divide ultimately came between the voices of the Church that argued for the control of sexual expression while “social values promoted sexual aggressiveness as a part of masculine identity.”²⁸

To put it in more symbolic terms, David Buchbinder notes that the male’s “phallic power resided in his denial of, rather than his acceding to, sexual desire. Despite the individual man’s inability finally to control it, the penis in its disguise as the phallus is a central symbol in the patriarchal order and especially in the

²⁴ Vern L. Bullough, “On Being a Male in the Middle Ages,” *Medieval Masculinities: Regarding Men in the Middle Ages*. Medieval Cultures, 7 (Minneapolis, MN, and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), 31–46; here 34.

²⁵ Bullough, “On Being a Male in the Middle Ages” (see note 24), 41.

²⁶ Lees, “Engendering Religious Desire” (see note 2), 17–40.

²⁷ Jacqueline Murray, “Hiding Behind the Universal Man,” *Handbook of Medieval Sexuality*, ed. Vern L. Bullough and James Brundage. Garland Reference Library of the Humanities, 1696 (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1996), 127.

²⁸ Murray, “Hiding Behind the Universal Man” (see note 27), 141.

economy of masculine power.”²⁹ These studies have thus shown the conflicting social discourses surrounding being male. The role of medicine thus might be seen to negotiate this contested space. In essence medical practice seems to recognize that it can shape that constructed image of the masculine in the medieval world. With respect to medical treatments related in an overt way to male essentialism, concern for the presence of hair, sexual impotence, and sexual aggressiveness appear to be most related to this early medieval construction of masculinity.

III Male Identity in Bald's *Leechbook* and Remedies that Preserve Maleness

Studies of masculinity in the early Middle Ages have uncovered the important role that hair plays in that construction. One has only to think of the name “Charles the Bald” to realize that it was clearly a marking characteristic and that its loss in medieval tonsure was understood in both spiritual and physiological ways.³⁰ The title “the Bald,” however, could be ironic as the traditions actually represent Charles as being quite hairy.³¹ Book One of Bald's *Leechbook*, contains the following with respect to hair, its loss, its restoration, and elimination:

3if mannes reax pealle pyre him realre min bone miclan pun3 ond haran sprecel ond eapyrte mōpopearde ond nerdpyrt pyre or þære pyrte and of pissum eallum þa realre ond of þære buteran þe nan pæter on ne come. 3if feax fealle apylle eorornrearn ond beþe þa heafod mid by spa peanme. Piþ þon 3if man calu sie pliniur se micla læce se3þ þirne læcedom. 3enim deade beon 3ebærne to ahsan ond lmfaed eac do ele to on þa seoþe spipe lan3e ofer 3ledum aseoh þonne ond aprin3e ond nime pelier leaf 3eenupi3e 3eote on þone ele. Pylle eft hpile on 3ledum aseoh þonne smire mid after bæþe.

Heafod bæþ pið þon; peli3er leaf pylle on pætene þpeah mið þis ær þu hit smenupe ond þe lear cnua spa 3esoden pnij on ob þa hio sie dru3e þa þu mæ3e smerpan aëfter mid þære seafe do spa xxx nihta len3 3ir hir þearf sie. Piþ þon þe hær ne peaxe aëmettan æ3nu 3enim 3nid smit on þa strope ne cymð þær næfne aenij pæx up.

²⁹ David Buchbinder, *Studying Men and Masculinities* (London and New York: Routledge, 2013), 131.

³⁰ For a study of masculinity in monastic settings, see *Holiness and Masculinity in the Middle Ages*, ed. P. H. Cullum and Katherine J. Lewis. *Religion and Culture in the Middle Ages* (Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 2004).

³¹ Janet Nelson, *Charles the Bald* (Essex: Essex University Press, 1992), 13.

3if hæn to þicce sie ȝenim spealpan ȝebærn under tīzelan to ahsan ond læt seedan þa ahran on.

[If a man's hair fall out, work him a salve; take micel (great) wolf's bane (hellebore) and viper's bugloss, and the netherward part of the burdock, and ferdwort (gentian); work the salve out of that wort and out of all of these, and from butter on which no water hath come. If hair fall[s] out, boil the polypody fern, and foment the head with that so warm. In case that a man be bald, the michel leech (great doctor) Plinius saith this leechdom: take dead bees, burn them to ashes the strain, wring out; and take leaves of willow, pound them, pour the juice into the oil, boil again for a while over the gledes (over the coals), strain them; smear therewith after the bath.

A head-bath for that: boil willow leaves in water; wash with that, ere thou smear it and pound the leaves so sodden; bind on at night, until they be dry, that thou may smear with the salve; do so for thirty nights, longer if need for it be. In order that hair may not wax (grow): take emmets (ants) eggs; rub them up, smudge on the place; never will any hair come up there. If hair should be too thick, take a swallow, burn it to ashes under a tile and have the ashes shed on.]³²

This passage not only contains some very interesting ideas still current in folk medicine usage, but more directly for the current concern, it is a remedy against one of the most obvious elements of masculinity. Readers may be surprised to know that hellebore, viper's bugloss, and willow leaves are associated with hair restoration even today in holistic medicine.³³ The directions indicate different herbs are to be used, with the most potent one for complete baldness. That a patient should continue the treatment for 30 days sounds a great deal like a modern period of application. It would also suggest that this treatment requires sustained management.

More interesting, however, than the claims that such a treatment will restore hair for men is the cultural construct behind the remedy. Without question, maleness has been historically associated with the presence of hair on the head and facial hair as well. Hair was the outward, public manifestation of vital heat. As Cadden notes, "heat allowed men to refine their superfluities into hair and beards." Further, the male has a beard because "he was made from earth."³⁴ Such has been a societal construct among Middle Eastern and European cultures for centuries, noted both in literature and art. There is no recognition in Bald's

³² Cockayne, *Leechdoms, Wortcunning, and Starcraft* (see note 9), 154–57.

³³ The connection between hellebore and conventional homeopathic remedies for hair loss can be found in many places. The following is a representative example: Hairstyle vision, "Some well-known hair loss recipes," retrieved from <http://hairstylevision.com/some-well-known-hair-loss-recipes/> on 8 June 2016.

³⁴ Cadden, Meanings of *Sex Differences* (see note 17), 171, 192.

Leechbook that women may lose hair. Luke Demaitre, looking at the balance of humors – an aspect also known in medieval medicine from the classical period – was the idea that “men were by nature warmer and therefore hairier than women, but they incurred baldness when they became colder with advancing age.”³⁵ These ideas actually have their source in Galen’s writing as Demaitre has noted:

Hairs originated and grew in an exhalation of bodily vapors that were dryer than sweat, thinner than the material of fingernails, but thicker than imperceptible evaporation. They emerged through pores that gave them their shape. When pores were too few or tight, as on the palms of the hands and soles of the feet, hairlessness was natural.³⁶

Clearly the top of the head had pores that would accommodate hair. It would thus seem likely that the remedies applied would attempt to open those pores that had closed. Clearly, the application of the warm remedy to the head was intended to open those pores. The natural warmth of the body is gone; the remedy supplies at, even if momentarily. From the comparative point of view, Cameron finds a somewhat similar method of treatment in the Latin version of the writings of Alexander of Tralles.³⁷ How effective it might have been remains unclear. For the Anglo-Saxon male, the loss of hair would be a visible marker in the culture to his own changing status. If masculinity in this culture is a balance, the loss of hair would signal an imbalance, even if the person were not advancing in years.

We have no way of knowing how frequent the practice of hair restoration was used, but that a remedy occurs alongside treatments for diseases that left unchecked would be terminal cannot be missed. The remedy is not about the cosmetic look of masculinity. The loss of hair meant a loss of status. The last of the Merovingian kings, Chiladeric III, was given a haircut as an image of his being deposed. He is noted as being of the “race of long-haired Merovingians.”³⁸ Clearly, this act was a part of ritual shaming. On the other hand, the balance in the body sets up another characteristic. The folk notions of wild people inhabiting the margins of the social order, and that they have uncontrolled hair would

³⁵ Luke Demaitre, *Medieval Medicine: The Art of Healing, From Head to Toe*. Praeger Series on the Middle Ages (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2013), 115. See also Galen, *Methods of Medicine, Books 10–14*, ed. and trans. Ian Johnson and G. H. R. Horsley (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2011), 525–33.

³⁶ Demaitre, *Medieval Medicine* (see note 34), 115.

³⁷ Cameron, *Anglo-Saxon Medicine* (see note 4), 22–23.

³⁸ Thomas Alder Pope, *An Introduction to the History of France* (London: Burns and Lambert, 1860), 43; I N Wood, *The Merovingian Kingdoms, 450–751* (London and New York: Longman, 1994); see also https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chiladeric_III (last accessed on June 9, 2016).

suggest that too much hair might also be problematic in the social order.³⁹ Their excessive hair often led them to live in forests, outside the domain of control of the civilized world. There is no reference to a bald warrior in *Beowulf*, but there are plenty of references to grizzled or gray-haired warriors; in fact, that is a key description of Hrothgar, the king of the Danes. No other male is mentioned as having hair, but we, of course, assume they did. In the Icelandic *Egil Saga*, in what looks like an inconsequential comment, the narrator observes that Egil was bald early in his life as was Skallagrimr.⁴⁰ Clearly, if a person were bald, the text traditions of the early Middle Ages seem to call attention to it. Thus the reference to Hrothgar then suggests his gray hair is emblematic of age, but more importantly wisdom. Clearly, having hair was the expectation. It was hardly a matter cosmetic in nature; it was a sign marking a male's performative possibilities.

Another area where Bald's *Leechbook* comments on male behavior relates to the management of sexual desire. The writer of the book notes,

3if mon sie to præne pyl hindheolopan on pilisicum ealað drince on neaht nertið. 3if mon sie tounpræne pyl on meolce þa ilean pyrt þonne aprænrt þu. Pyl on eope meolce eft hindheolopan alexanderian ronneter polm hatte pyrt þonne biþ hit spa him leofost bið.

[If a man be too salacious, boil water agrimony in foreign ale; let me drink thereof at night fasting. If a man be too slow *ad venerem*, boil the ilk wort in milk; then you will give him courage. Boil in ewe's milk, again, hindheel, alexanders, the wort which hight (called) For-net's palm, then it will be with him as he would liefest (desire to) have it be.]⁴¹

That this passage points to two alternative – both extremes – is a point worth noting. Agrimony, in Greek medicine, was seen as a regulator of male health. Thus it could work in two particular ways to restore a balance. Audrey L. Meaney argues that the governing theory behind the entire *Leechbook* of Bald is “imbalance.”⁴² Culturally speaking, the challenges are much greater, hence the reason why this topic surfaces in medical texts such as Bald's *Leechbook*. A man who was “too salacious” was a man whose masculine image was unbalanced. He could actually be charged as being too feminine in one way of thinking, and he could

³⁹ Buchbinder, *Studying Men and Masculinities* (see note 29), 134; Richard Burnheimer, *Wild Men in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1952), 3–30.

⁴⁰ *Egil's Saga*, trans. E. R. Eddison (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1930), 34–40, 111, 116.

⁴¹ Cockayne, *Leechdoms, Wortcunning, and Starcraft* (see note 9), 144–45.

⁴² Audrey L. Meaney, “The Anglo-Saxon View of the Causes of Illness,” *Health, Disease, and Healing in Medieval Culture*, ed. Sheila Campbell, Bert Hall, and David Klausner (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992), 12–33.

be an easy victim for the female gender, if he were oversexed. At the same point, a male who was unable to perform his sexual obligations would be a suspect man. The pairing of these two remedies together suggests that masculine sexual desire had to be carefully monitored. These are clearly related to an essentialist notion of gender and sexuality. That the patient is to drink the remedy while fasting probably has something to do with the idea that food and sexual appetite go together, or perhaps to see a stronger effect of the remedy. That the remedy is the same, except the medium in which water agrimony is boiled, suggests it is the active agent that makes a difference.

Masculine ability had to be demonstrated in terms of sexual performance with women and symbolically through interactions with other males.⁴³ The heroic corpus of literature in Anglo-Saxon England from *Beowulf*, *The Battle of Maldon*, *The Battle of Brunanburh*, and *Wulf and Eadwacer* show these characteristics. The fear of impotence that can be read in part of this description is an extension of deeply held cultural fear. With respect to excessive desire, the challenges were equally as great. From the theological perspective as Joyce E. Salisbury notes, “Men’s sexuality was located in the loins, while women’s was in the navel. The loins represented strength, musculature, power, and activity, while the navel represented passivity, receptiveness, and nurturing.”⁴⁴ There are specific notions in Bald’s *Leechbook* for puffiness of the genitals and the groin.⁴⁵ Further, in works as early as those of Isidore of Seville, aided by the church fathers, located a greater carnality in women than in men.⁴⁶ Modern people would, of course, question these deeply held assumptions in the medieval world today. Given also that overindulgence in sexual activity resulted in a cooling of the body, the difficulties were magnified for men.

There is also the sense that in being overly lusty, he is becoming more like the female. What seems clear in Bald’s *Leechbook* is that medicine is attempting to control male behavior in a zone of power and patriarchal influence. The recipe itself suggests that men exist in a balance, perhaps a very anxious balance relative to their identity. Old English literature is not overly devoted to sexual excess,

⁴³ The body of scholarly literature is extensive as it is specifically what the masculine heroic considers. The following provide some keen insights into the tradition: Allen J. Frantzen, *Before the Closet: Same-Sex Love from Beowulf to Angels in America* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 68–107; see also the contributions to *The Hero Reconsidered: Essays on Medieval Heroism in Honor of George Clark*, ed. Robin Waugh and James Weldon (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 2010).

⁴⁴ Salisbury, “Gendered Sexuality” (see note 16), 85.

⁴⁵ Cockayne, *Leechdoms, Wortcunning, and Starcraft* (see note 9), 70–71, 72–73.

⁴⁶ Salisbury, “Gendered Sexuality” (see note 16), 85.

but it is certainly possible to see in a poem such as *Wulf and Eadwacer*, where Wulf's excess of desire seems to have produced the "whelp" while Eadwacer has been away. This is probably the only poem in Old English where infidelity may be directly presented. Perhaps more curious are the several references (in *Beowulf*) to Hrothgar's desiring to go to the woman's apartment to be with Wealtheow – at the least it is a rather cryptic reference to sexual desire, but at another level it might be a reference to Hrothgar's uncontrolled desire. Perhaps it is wise not to press too far with these literary possibilities. From the prescription in Bald's *Leechbook*, it should be clear that in whatever extreme the male finds himself, the medicine of the day was all too ready to assist uncontrolled desire. To modern readers, this would seem curious. To medieval doctors, this was part and parcel of mapping the human experience with care.

When readers think about the early Middle Ages or Anglo-Saxon period in England, they often envision it from the literature of the period – heroic, elegiac, saintly legends, and lyric. From the historical angle, we might note the role of kings, the establishment of kingdoms, the writing of laws, and archeological remains that reveal important aspects of a variety of cultural practices.

Bald's *Leechbook* provides an important window on the health concerns of Anglo-Saxon England. Its hybrid nature of Germanic and classical medicine, its recognition of gender differentiation, and its attempt to bring a variety of treatments to the external and internal bodies of humans make it an enigma that will certainly continue to challenge medievalists who desire to reconstruct what the Middle Ages may have been like. Audrey L. Meaney's final remarks related to the understanding of the cause of illness in her study of Bald's *Leechbook* and other medieval medical texts seems prudent in this study:

The Anglo-Saxons were, like ourselves, complex human beings, creatures of emotion and impulse and ready to believe that the world is full of more creatures that are envisaged in any logical philosophy, but also capable of arguing rationally and comprehending a system with different kinds of causes for different kinds of diseases.⁴⁷

In the modern world, doctor/patient confidentiality is a significant legal issue, and that confidentiality is expected to be maintained. The medieval world, of course, did not have those expectations. In speaking of male health, particularly that associated with hair and various aspects of sexual desire, these were at times observable to different kinds of audiences, whether corporate or intimately personal.

⁴⁷ Meaney, "The Anglo-Saxon View of the Causes of Illness" (see note 39), 25.

That men in the Middle Ages were concerned about their physical appearance and their sexual ardor should be taken less as a vain or wishful desire than as an indication that maleness was by essential and social construction always under review. Masculinity was by definition performative. Bald's *Leechbook* not only provides insight into the early medieval understanding of the body, with its challenges to balance brought on by injury, age, forms of disease referred to as 'flying venom,' but to those essential roles of public and private masculinity. Readers can only speculate how Scyld Schefing, Hrothgar, Beowulf, Unferth, Hygelac, Wiglaf, Birthnoth, the Viking warriors of "The Battle of Brunanburh," Wulf, male saints in their legends, Joseph in the "Advent Lyrics," the male dreamer in "The Dream of the Rood," and a host of others understood the role of Anglo-Saxon medicine in connection with their maleness. At the level of practice of 'real males'" – as opposed to literary ones – we can only assume that the medical community attempted to assist them with particular needs that were necessary to health.

What seems most intriguing as a prospect is the role that King Alfred the Great had in Bald's *Leechbook*. According to Asser, Alfred suffered from a variety of maladies. We should, therefore, not be surprised that his reign initiated the first vernacular text of medicine, Bald's *Leechbook*. If "the end of physic is our body's health" as noted at the start of this essay, Bald certainly gave men, women, and children during his day his best efforts. To men, he gave some keys for maintaining their own masculine status.

Belle S. Tuten

The *Necessitas Naturae* and Monastic Hygiene

Although archaeology can tell us about the waste management strategies of some medieval monasteries, we know very little about how monks dealt with or thought about their daily bodily functions.¹ The complication of having numbers of people living together – increasingly, as complete enclosure became more and more important, in a confined space – brought practical sanitary concerns to monastic superiors. St. Benedict, who famously solved Montecassino’s water problems with a miracle, must have included latrines when he suggested that “omnia necessaria” be built inside the monastery complex.² But the sources,

1 There are a number of surveys of the technologies associated with monastic water management, which with a few exceptions concentrate on the period after the year 1000. See Meredith Parsons Lillich, “Cleanliness with Godliness: A Discussion of Medieval Monastic Plumbing,” *Mélanges à la mémoire du Père Anselme Dimier*, ed. Benoît Chauvin (Arbois: Pupillin, 1982), vol. 3 part 5, 123–49. C. J. Bond has surveyed both the urban and rural aspects of high medieval monastic planning: C. J. Bond, “Water Management in the Rural Monastery,” *The Archaeology of Rural Monasteries*, ed. Roberta Gilchrist and Harold Mytum, B. A. R. British Series, 203 (Oxford: B. A. R., 1989), 83–111; C. J. Bond, “Water Management in the Urban Monastery,” *Advances in Monastic Archaeology*, ed. Roberta Gilchrist and Harold Mytum, B. A. R. British Series, 227 (Oxford: Tempus Reparatum, 1993), 43–78. For a broader survey, see James Bond, “Monastic Water Management in Great Britain: A Review,” *Monastic Archaeology: Papers on the Study of Medieval Monasteries*, ed. Graham Keevil, Mick Aston, and Teresa Hall (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2001), 88–136. For major works on medieval water management, see *Die Wasserversorgung im Mittelalter*, ed. Klaus Grewe. Geschichte der Wasserversorgung, 4 (Mainz: Verlag Philipp von Zabern, 1991); Roberta J. Magnusson, *Water Technology in the Middle Ages*, Johns Hopkins Studies in the History of Technology (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001); *L’hydraulique monastique: milieux, réseaux, usages*, ed. Léon Pressouyre and Paul Benoit. Rencontres à Royaumont, 8 (Grâne: Créaphis, 1996); *Working with Water in Medieval Europe: Technology and Resource Use*, ed. Paolo Squatriti, Technology and Change in History, 3 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2000); *Aborte im Mittelalter und der Frühen Neuzeit: Bauforschung, Archäologie, Kulturgeschichte*, ed. Olaf Wagener. Studien zur internationalen Architektur- und Kunstgeschichte, 117 (Petersberg: Imhof, 2014); see the review by Albrecht Classen in *Mediaevistik* 28 (2015): 371–72.

2 Rule of St. Benedict, chapter 66. *RB 1980: The Rule of St. Benedict in Latin and English*, ed. and trans. Timothy Fry et al. (Collegeville MN: The Liturgical Press, 1981), 286–89. On Benedict’s miracle, see Gregory the Great, *Vita S. Benedicti*, 5.3, *The Life of St. Benedict [by] Gregory the Great*, ed. Adalbert de Vogüé and Hilary Costello (Petersham, MA: St. Bede’s Publications, 1993), 43.

Belle S. Tuten, Juniata College, Huntingdon, Pennsylvania

both archaeological and textual, do not directly address monks' attitudes toward bodily waste itself, despite a wealth of sources in which they talked about their bodies, particularly with regard to sexuality.

This study attempts to query some early medieval sources to expose monastic attitudes about the body and its products. I will argue that the control of bodily waste was intimately bound up with monastic ideals, and was expressed throughout the monastic day as well as in Frankish monastic commentaries of the seventh to ninth centuries.

I will propose as a main part of the argument here that in monastic texts of the Carolingian period, regulation of excretion is an expression of control of the self, as monks understood it. It is intricately linked with discomfort about the dirtiness of sexual function, as well as the general dirtiness of the body. I do not intend to argue a straw-man position in which I posit that medieval monks always perceived a clear dichotomy of "the body is bad, the spirit is good."³ But I will argue that early medieval monastic practice was centered on the control and regimentation of the body, and that while a large portion of the discourse that surrounded the body explicitly concerned sexuality, the control of more mundane body function is also implicit in monastic documents and in monastic life.⁴

Taboos, Modern and Medieval

An important corollary to the question of why monks, who were so very clear in their distinctions between body and soul, earth and heaven, did not talk more about basic bodily function is the question of why our academic disciplines so seldom talk about it. Ideas about propriety or decency certainly plays a heavy role; we socialize our young children extensively to get them to stop talking about bodily function, so the deliberate decision to be silent about waste becomes a

³ Caroline Walker Bynum, "Why All the Fuss about the Body? A Medievalist's Perspective," *Critical Inquiry* 22.1 (1995): 1–33; here 7. Bynum points out that medievalists are often guilty of making this dichotomy too simple.

⁴ In making this argument, I am dipping a toe into a larger debate among historians of monasticism who have been grappling with Erving Goffman's concept of the "total institution" and whether a monastery fits this definition. I do not intend to take a stand on this debate except to point out that the discourse of early medieval monastic writers, from Cassian to Benedict of Aniane, clearly articulated policies of control over monks both personally and in groups with an eye toward obedience and uniformity. See Wojtek Ježierski, *Total St. Gall: Medieval Monastery as a Disciplinary Institution*. Stockholm Studies in History/ Acta Universitatis Stockholmiensis, 92 (Stockholm: Stockholm University, 2010).

mark of maturity and belonging. While medieval historians have just begun to consider this most daily of daily concerns, recent books by literary scholars have explored the extremely picturesque uses to which body function could be put in medieval literature. They explore the dense metaphors that excrement could provide for concerns about bodily and spiritual purity on the one hand, or bawdy hilarity on the other.⁵

Anthropologists have published very few explorations of the meanings attached to human waste. In discussing this, Sjaak Ven der Geest commented that “[Anthropologists] seem to be restrained by relatively trivial codes of decency, which stop them from openly speaking or writing about such dirty and childish matters as human defecation.”⁶ Here, in our own academic terms, are the markers that may have had meaning for early medieval monastics, and certainly have meaning for modern scholars of the Middle Ages: “dirty and childish.”⁷ These are powerful concepts. They evoke a view of the past, as Umberto Eco noted, as a place of a “shaggy medievalism” with disgusting personal habits and simplistic ideologies.⁸ So powerful are the concepts of “dirty and childish” that we carry our aversion to them into our daily discourse; if we speak of urination or defecation, it’s either infantile (leading us to distance ourselves from it, as mature adults); or humorous (because transgressive).

The word “dirty” implies something that we should not touch, because it will contaminate. Mary Douglas’s influential work *Purity and Danger* is often cited in discussions of cleanliness and uncleanness. As she explains, if we are concerned

⁵ Valerie Allen, *On Farting: Language and Laughter in the Middle Ages*. The New Middle Ages (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); Susan Signe Morrison, *Excrement in the Late Middle Ages: Sacred Filth and Chaucer's Fecopoetics*. The New Middle Ages (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008); Albrecht Classen, “Farting and the Power of Human Language, with a Focus on Hans Wilhelm Kirchhof's Sixteenth-Century *Schwärne*,” *Medievalia et Humanistica* 35 (2009): 57–76; Martha Bayless, *Sin and Filth in Medieval Culture: The Devil in the Latrine*. Routledge Studies in Medieval Literature and Culture (London: Routledge, 2012).

⁶ Sjaak Van der Geest, “Not Knowing About Defecation,” *On Knowing and Not Knowing in the Anthropology of Medicine*, ed. Roland Littlewood (Walnut Creek CA: Left Coast Press, 2007), 75–86; here 75–6. He points out what a striking omission this is for a discipline that is so intensely interested in taboos and notions of purity and impurity. Gabriel Weisburg makes a similar point for art history: Gabriel P. Weisberg, “Scatological Art,” *Art Journal* 52.3 (1993): 18–19.

⁷ See Albrecht Classen, “The ‘Dirty Middle Ages,’” in this volume; also Gerhard Jaritz, “Excrement and Waste,” *Handbook of Medieval Culture: Fundamental Aspects and Conditions of the European Middle Ages*, ed. Albrecht Classen, 3 vols. (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2015), vol. 1, 406–14.

⁸ Umberto Eco, “Dreaming of the Middle Ages,” *Travels in Hyper-Reality* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1983), 61–72; here 69.

about dirt, we move it, control it, hide it; or, failing that, we pretend it's not there.⁹ These observations are all true of the way our society views human excrement.

When we are forced to confront excrement or other bodily waste, we react to it with a characteristic facial expression and an emotion which we call disgust.¹⁰ Since the 1990s social psychologists have broadly characterized disgust as one of three "moral emotions," including anger and contempt, that provoke negative responses and aversion behavior in human beings.¹¹ But disgust is not just phys-

⁹ Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger* (1966; London: Routledge, 2002), 44–45.

¹⁰ A number of scientists have explored the particular feelings, physiological reactions and facial expressions associated with disgust, which seem to occur across all human societies. Because disgust reactions are often expressed when we make decisions about what we should not eat, and our disgust reactions signal these decisions to others, social psychologist Paul Rozin originally conceptualized disgust in his studies in the 1980s as a food-based behavior. See Paul Rozin and April E. Fallon, "A Perspective on Disgust," *Psychological Review* 94.1 (1987): 23–41. On facial expressions as disgust markers, see Paul Rozin, Laura Lowery, and Rhonda Ebert, "Varieties of Disgust Faces and the Structure of Disgust," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 66.5 (1994): 870–81. Risk of infection may also shape these reactions. Stuart Walton, *A Natural History of Human Emotions* (New York: Grove Press, 2004), 91, notes: "The advantage of [disgust] in evolutionary terms is that it once taught us to steer clear of rotting carcasses, faeces and so forth, because of the serious risk of infection they carry." Neuroscientists are in the process of discovering how this works in evolutionary terms. See Valerie Curtis, Mícheál de Barra, and Robert Aunger, "Disgust as an Adaptive System for Disease Avoidance Behaviour," *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London B: Biological Sciences* 366.1563 (2011): 389–401.

¹¹ See, for example, Paul Rozin et al., "The CAD Triad Hypothesis: A Mapping Between Three Moral Emotions (Contempt, Anger, Disgust) and Three Moral Codes (Community, Autonomy, Divinity)," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 76.4 (1999): 574–86. While some psychologists have argued for a model in which the three moral emotions are manifestations of the same underlying negative response, others argue that they are differentiated in various ways, all of which are designed to protect the individual. Interpersonally, that can mean the avoidance of harmful individuals; more broadly, it can mean avoidance of harmful situations or substances. For a helpful overview, see Cendri A. Hutcherson and James J. Gross, "The Moral Emotions: A Social-Functional Account of Anger, Disgust, and Contempt," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 100.4 (2011): 1–19. Recently, Joshua Tybur and others have identified three different disgust domains: resistance to pathogens, sexuality, and morality. Joshua M. Tybur, Debra Lieberman, and Vladas Griskevicius, "Microbes, Mating, and Morality: Individual Differences in Three Functional Domains of Disgust," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 97.1 (2009): 103–22. There is ample biological reason for not wanting to eat material that is already digested or that is rotten, and our disgust reactions discourage us from doing so. Susan Miller, a psychoanalyst who has studied disgust extensively, treats it as a facet of the differentiation between self and other. What disgusts is anything that can invade the body through any orifice, and which is understood as being "other" to the self. What disgusts us changes with development through childhood and adolescence, though bodily excretions are more or less constantly disgusting because they are both self and non-self at once. Susan B. Miller, "Disgust: Conceptualization, De-

iological and developmental; what disgusts, as Douglas suggested, is cultural. In *The Anatomy of Disgust*, anthropologist William I. Miller identified disgust in the western world as an emotion which is provoked by specific cultural and moral situations and by particular sensory experiences, especially smell and taste.¹²

Our group agreements about these points are what constitute our moral taboos, and in many ways we construct community by being clear about what is (or ought to be) disgusting.¹³ Seen in this way, elimination and its products violate not only our understanding of control of our environment, but control of our own bodies and our interior selves. We need our excreta to be invisible, controlled, and put in the right places.¹⁴ So violent are our reactions to the implications of loss of this control that we can barely bring ourselves to mention it to one another, except in particular circumstances. But something this powerful needs discussing; it rests on the fundament of human experience. As Gay Hawkins puts it,

Shit is “good to think with” because of the ways in which it can unsettle the boundaries between the body and its others, public and private, truth and concealment, state and environment, and, of course, pure and impure.¹⁵

The Monastic Body

So why didn’t medieval monks discuss excretion as carefully as they discussed sexual purity? In addition to my problematic contention above that early medieval

development and Dynamics,” *International Review of Psychoanalysis* 13 (1986): 299–301. See also Susan B. Miller, “Disgust Reactions,” *Contemporary Psychoanalysis* 29 (1993): 711–35; here 717–18.

12 William I. Miller, *The Anatomy of Disgust* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 2–5, 93–101.

13 Ibid., 194. See also Carolyne Larrington, “Diet, Defecation and the Devil: Disgust and the Pagan Past,” *Medieval Obscenities*, ed. Nicola McDonald (York, UK: York Medieval Press, 2006), 138–55.

14 This is not true, of course, of all cultures. See, for example, Ward H. Goodenough, “Did you?,” *The Naked Anthropologist: Tales from Around the World*, ed. Philip R. DeVita (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Co., 1992), 112–15; J. B. Loudon, “On Body Products,” *The Anthropology of the Body*, ed. John Blacking (London: Academic Press, 1977), 161–78.

15 Gay Hawkins, “Down the Drain: Shit and the Politics of Disturbance,” *Culture and Waste: the Creation and Destruction of Value*, ed. Gay Hawkins and Stephen Muecke (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003), 39–52; here 42. On public sanitation as a form of Foucauldian social control, see Dominique Laporte, *History of Shit*, trans. Nadia Benabid and Rodolphe el-Khoury (1978; Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002).

thinkers had a similar attitude to our own about the dirtiness of bodily function, we may be faced with the very ordinariness of the privy – a place one visits every day, and performs functions that everyone performs. Both the traditional “great man, great event” historical approach, and the text-based approach on which we rely in history, are handicapped by the invisibility of the quotidian. Why should medieval texts discuss things that are so profoundly universal, and because universal, already understood? We might suspect a deliberate repression of the dirty and childish, similar to the one that Michel Foucault identified for illicit sexual activity: a “general and studied silence ... [A]n admission that there was nothing to say about such things, nothing to see, and nothing to know.”¹⁶ I believe that it is also the normal-ness of bodily function that renders it mostly invisible to us.

To problematize the discussion further, we must acknowledge that the relationship between Frankish monastic commentaries and their sources are complex. Not only did authors copy one another and adapt each other’s ideas and texts, they also chose what to talk about in their rules by imitating the subjects previous authors had thought were important. When Benedict of Nursia took on the task of writing his own rule, he paid close attention to the Rule of the Master and to other previous rule writers; many writers who came after him modeled their rules on his. Benedict of Aniane, who compiled the *Concordia Regularum* in the wake of the 817 councils at Aachen, quoted extensively from earlier rules in rubrics that he derived from their categories.¹⁷ Thus, in such documents information about monastic latrine habits appears consistently under certain rubrics, and not at all under others. This requires imaginative reading into the texts to find the places where the writers might have included latrine habits in their plans for the monastic day.

Monitoring the Toilet

Monastic authors’ favorite phrase to describe going to the latrine, urinating or defecating, was ‘attending to nature’s needs’ or responding to the ‘necessitas naturae.’ They inherited this polite phrase from classical and biblical writers

¹⁶ Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*. Vol. 1: *An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (1978; New York: Vintage Books, 1990), 4.

¹⁷ A helpful analysis of the genealogies and influences of monastic rules is Adalbert de Vogué, “The Cenobitic Rules of the West,” *Cistercian Studies* 12 (1977): 175–83.

(who, as we know, had much earthier terms at their disposal).¹⁸ Benedict of Nursia's Rule mentions 'nature's needs' only once, in chapter 8, as a part of setting out the timing of the night office in different seasons.

Hiemis tempore, id est a kalendas Novembres usque in Pascha, iuxta considerationem rationis, octava hora noctis surgendum est, ut modice amplius de media nocte pausetur et iam digesti surgant ... A Pascha autem usque ad supradictis Novembres, sic temperetur hora ut vigiliarum agenda parvissimo intervallo, quo fratres ad necessarie naturae exeant, mox matutini, qui incipiente luce agendi sunt, subsequantur.

[During the winter season, that is, from the first of November until Easter, it seems reasonable to arise at the eighth hour of the night. By sleeping until a little past the middle of the night, the brothers can arise with their food fully digested ...

Between Easter and the first of November mentioned above, the time for Vigils should be adjusted so that a very short interval after Vigils will give the monks opportunity to go out for nature's needs. Then Lauds should follow immediately at first light.]¹⁹

During the monastic day as it developed from the rules of the period, there must have been a number of times when the monks went, more or less *en masse*, either to urinate outside (as the Rule seems to suggest), or to use the latrine. Before retiring and after rising are obvious. When the only meal of the day occurred after Sext, as in the summer, Benedict allowed the monks to rest or read for several hours afterward, and it is also likely that this period of relaxation after a meal would have provided opportunity to visit the privy; similarly, in winter when the meal was at Nones, they were allowed to return to their assigned reading until Vespers, another good opportunity for a latrine break.²⁰ The Master encouraged a nap after the noon meal as a way to fortify the monks during hot weather or

18 See J. N. Adams, *The Latin Sexual Vocabulary* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982), 243. The term *requisita naturae* comes from Deuteronomy 23:12. Bayless, *Sin and Filth in Medieval Culture: The Devil in the Latrine*, 56. On the various terms in ancient languages for the body functions, see Carl Darling Buck, *A Dictionary of Selected Synonyms in the Principal Indo-European Languages: A Contribution to the History of Ideas* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949).

19 Rule of St. Benedict chapter 8. *RB 1980: the Rule of St. Benedict in Latin and English*, ed. Fry et al. (see note 2), 202–03. I have changed the *RB 1980* translation here slightly, the reason for which is below. The same arrangement is implied for the night office throughout the Rule of St. Benedict.

20 Rule of St. Benedict chapter 48. *RB 1980: the Rule of St. Benedict in Latin and English*, ed. Fry et al. (see note 2), 248–51. See also C. H. Lawrence, *Medieval Monasticism: Forms of Religious Life in Western Europe in the Middle Ages* (London: Longman, 1984), 99–103.

during a fast.²¹ The *Marbach Statutes* of 816 suggested that the time between the noontime divine service and the meal was to be devoted to study “unless someone has to go out for nature’s needs.”²²

The structured quality of the monastic day makes it likely that medieval monasteries experienced “peak times” of latrine use, which may explain why in some monasteries the latrine blocks were built with fairly large numbers of seats (just as many public buildings are today). The *Capitula Notiarum* (817) specified that “up to four junior brothers, if that many express the need, shall be sent out to urinate and shall return together.”²³ Walter Horn’s and Ernest Born’s study of the Plan of Saint Gall suggests that the St. Gall privies were quite numerous, providing one privy per 8.5 monks. Horn and Born comment that St. Gall’s hygiene “must be proclaimed to be superior to that prevailing under average conditions in most Western countries today.”²⁴ This comment is an exaggeration, but I do think that these pieces of evidence indicate that there were appropriate times when monks would have had the necessary time and license for defecation. The normal interval between ingestion and excretion is approximately 48 hours; with variation for the individual, we might expect that just after the noon or evening meal would have been a common time for visits to the latrine.²⁵

Monastic writers mentioned the latrine most frequently in discussions of young monks, *infantes* or *adolescentes*, and their supervision, especially at night. As Horn and Born remark: “Besides his bed and his bath, [the latrine] was the only other place where, by no fault of his own, [a monk] could not avoid bodily contact with himself.”²⁶ Being alone and having contact with one’s body suggested masturbation or other sexual activity to monastic writers, and they

²¹ Rule of the Master chapter 50. *The Rule of the Master*, ed. Luke Eberle (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1977), 190.

²² “Interuallum quod inter opus dei et horam refectionis contigerit aut orando aut legendo transiugit excepto si ad necessitatem naturae quis ire debeat.” *Marbach Statutes*, ed. J. Semmler. *Initia Consuetudines Benedictinae: Consuetudines Saeculi Octavi et Noni*, ed. Kassius Hallinger. *Corpus Consuetudinum Monasticarum*, 1 (Siegburg: Apud Franciscum Schmitt, 1963), 449.

²³ “Ut quatuor fratres iuniores seu quantos exposcerit necessitas deputentur ad miscendum, qui tamen reficiantur cum ceteris,” *Capitula notiarum* XIX, ed. D. H. Franck and M. Laach. *Initia Consuetudines Benedictinae* (see note 22), 344.

²⁴ Walter Horn and Ernest Born, *The Plan of St. Gall: A Study of the Architecture and Economy of and Life in a Paradigmatic Carolingian Monastery*, 3 vols. (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1979), vol. 2, 303.

²⁵ C. S. Probert, P. M. Emmett, and K. W. Heaton, “Some Determinants of Whole-gut Transit Time: a Population-based Study,” *QJM: An International Journal of Medicine* 88.5 (1995): 311–15.

²⁶ Horn and Born, *The Plan of St. Gall: A Study of the Architecture and Economy of and Life in a Paradigmatic Carolingian Monastery* (see note 24), vol. 2, 304.

adjusted their advice accordingly. Most of the monastic rules used in the Carolingian period required the monks to sleep together *en masse* in a dormitory, and the rules were written to discourage the personal contact that might arise in close quarters. The rule writers also attempted to force the abbots to spend as much time as possible with the monks.²⁷ Both the Master and Benedict of Nursia called for the monks to sleep fully clothed in separate beds; the Master specified that the abbot should sleep in the center of a circle of beds.²⁸ Benedict added that the monks should sleep with a light burning all night.²⁹ Benedict of Aniane quoted the seventh-century rule of Fructuosus, which specified that the prior of the monastery should patrol the dormitory at night, that a light should be kept burning, and that the beds should be separated by one cubit; he also quoted Isidore of Seville (560–636 C.E.), who suggested a deacon should supervise each group of 10 monks.³⁰ Carolingian ecclesiastical statutes echoed the sentiment that monks should be grouped, supervised, and encouraged to be quiet.³¹ Adelard of Corbie ordered that in the dormitory at Corbie “No one ought to disrobe, or get in or out of bed clumsily, or do anything careless like that which shall make a racket or some disturbing noise.”³²

²⁷ For example, *Synodi Primae Aquisgranensis Acta Praeliminaria* (816), ed. J. Semmler. *Initia Consuetudines Benedictinae: Consuetudines Saeculi Octavi et Noni*, 435. “III. capitulum, ut abbes suis sint monachis concordes in manducando, in bibendo, in dormiendo, in vestiendo, in vigiliis, in operando, quando in aliis utilitatibus non fuerint occupati.” “Chapter 4, that the abbots shall be in company with their monks when eating, drinking, sleeping, dressing, during vigils and while working, and when they are not occupied doing useful things.”

²⁸ Rule of the Master chapter 29. *The Rule of the Master*, ed. Eberle (see note 21), 212.

²⁹ Rule of St. Benedict chapter 22. *RB 1980: The Rule of St. Benedict in Latin and English*, ed. Fry et al. (see note 2), 218–19.

³⁰ *Concordia Regularum* 29.5 and 29.6. *Benedictus Anianensis Concordia Regularvm*, ed. Pierre Bonnerue, 2 vols. *Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Medievalis*, 168–168A (Turnhout: Brepols, 1999), vol. 1, 246–47.

³¹ A decretal of 817 specified only that the monks should be supervised at all times. *Decreta Authentica* (817), no. XXI(iii), ed. J. Semmler. *Initia Consuetudines Benedictinae*, 478. “Ut dormitorum iuxta oratorium constituatur ubi supervenientes monachi dormiant.” “That the dormitory be placed near the oratory, where the monks shall be supervised while sleeping.”

³² “Nemo vestimenta sua excutere, neo incaute ascendere, vel descendere de lecto debet, vel cetera his similia, quae strepitu, vel cuiuslibet incommodo sonitum reddant, incaute agere debet.” Adelard of Corbie, *Statutes*, chapter 4. *Polyptyque de l’abbé Irminon*, ed. Benjamin Guerard, 2 vols. (Paris: Imprimerie Royale, 1844), vol. 2, 317.

Minding the Children

Mayke de Jong has shown that quartering children separately from the larger group of monastic brothers had become common by the ninth century as child oblation became widespread and the number of children the monks cared for increased. Benedict had advised that younger monks should be mixed in with the older ones, but groups of children seem to have required more supervision than Benedict had provided.³³ In Carolingian monastic commentaries there was a strong emphasis on the supervision of children and the desirable qualities for the people designated to take care of them. Hildemar of Corbie and Civate gave detailed lectures analyzing the Rule of St. Benedict that were copied down by his monks, and he made it clear that he believed in very strict control of children.³⁴ In his commentary on Benedict's chapter on sleeping habits, Hildemar explained the rationale for such supervision. It is worth a somewhat long quote because of its interest.

Intelligitur autem, ut non solum ardeat candela in dormitorio, verum etiam in exitu, quia ubi et ubi non possunt seniores adolescentiores custodire, nisi fuerit, sicut dixi, candela ad exitum. Nam talis debet esse custodia infantum: decem enim infantes debent tres vel quatuor habere majores, qui illos custodiant ... Et si forte necessitas fuerit illis ad exitum ire aut etiam in aliquem locum, cum suo magistro eant ...

[It is to be understood as well, that the candle shall burn not only in the dormitory, but also *in exitu*, because “here and there” it is not possible for the seniors to oversee the *adolescentes*, unless there should be, as I say, a candle *ad exitum*. The care of the *infantes* ought to be thus: ten *infantes* ought to have three or four masters, who look after them ... And if necessity causes them to go to the latrine or any other place, they should go with their master ...]

Post completorium [autem] signo facto debent exire de choro, et magister illorum debet accendere lucernam et ire cum illis infantibus per singula altaria oratorii, ut per unum-quodque altare usquedum oraverint, unus magister in ante, alter magister vadat in medio, et tertius magister retro. Deinde ire debent ad necessaria naturae cum lumine et magister ipsorum cum illis, qui ad exitum voluerint venire. Et quia indigent illuc custodia ideo magistri eorum semper debent cum illis esse, usquequo collocari debeant ...

³³ Rule of St. Benedict chapter 22. *RB 1980: The Rule of St. Benedict in Latin and English*, ed. Fry et al. (see note 2), 218–19. On oblation, see Mayke de Jong, *In Samuel's Image: Child Oblation in the Early Medieval West*. Brill's Studies in Intellectual History, 12 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 1996), 101–02.

³⁴ On Hildemar, see Mayke de Jong, “Growing Up in a Carolingian Monastery,” *Journal of Medieval History* 9 (1983): 99–128.

[After the service is over and the signal given, they must go out of the choir and their master should light a lamp and go with the children to a single altar in the oratory, and at each altar they ought to say a prayer, one master in front, one master in the middle and one behind. Thence they ought to attend to nature's needs with a lamp and their master with them, those who wish to go *ad exitum*. And because they need this supervision, their masters ought to be with them all the time ...]

Illis autem, quibus necessaria est custodia, nunquam audeant foris exire dormitorio, et in basilicam ire causa orandi, nisi tantum quia non possit aliter fieri, cum opus est illis ire, v. gr. ad mingendum et ad exitum. Vadit ille, cui necesse est ire, et tangit illum seniorem, qui vigilat, et ille accedit lumen et vadit cum illo ad exitum, et sic lumine accenso revertitur cum illo ad lectum suum et collocat illum.

[These [young monks], for whom supervision is necessary, should never dare to exit the dormitory door, or to go to the basilica for prayer, unless it is impossible that it be otherwise, and they need to go out, that is to say, to urinate or *ad exitum*. He whose need it is to go out, shall go and touch his senior who is awake, and he shall take up a lamp and go with him *ad exitum*, and with the lantern held up return with him to his bed and place him back in it.]³⁵

Hildemar's frequent use of the word *exitus* in his commentary suggests a “going out,” or “exit,” but in this context it clearly refers to the latrine as the place where brothers are most likely to go out of the dormitory.³⁶ Hildemar apparently regarded the latrine as a place where the young monks might become sexually involved, for the chapter in which these passages appear has a thorough discussion of preventing homosexual behavior as well as dealing with nocturnal emissions. Maintaining *custodia* over his young monks, Hildemar felt, would help them to grow up uncontaminated and ready to serve the Lord as priestly elites. This strict supervision, as Lynda L. Coon has argued, subjected the young monks to a “panoptic gaze” that oversaw them and shaped them into a corporate model of monastic purity.³⁷ Close supervision of all monks became a norm of the Carolingian period and a fixture of high medieval monasticism.³⁸ In these sources, urination and defecation are part of the highly structured life of the monk, in which there was

³⁵ Hildemar of Civate, Commentary on the Rule of St. Benedict, chapter 22. *Expositio regulae ab Hildemaro tradita et nunc primum typis mandata*, ed. R. Mittermüller, *Vita et Regula SS. P. Benedicti una cum expositione regulae*, 3 (Regensburg: Pustet, 1880), 331–34. See also the translation available at the Hildemar Project: <http://www.hildemar.org/> (last accessed on August 31, 2015).

³⁶ See also Adams, *The Latin Sexual Vocabulary* (see note 18), 242.

³⁷ Lynda L. Coon, *Dark Age Bodies: Gender and Monastic Practice in the Early Medieval West*. The Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 119–20.

³⁸ The *circulator* became a recognized category of monastic officer, although his office was to oversee the entire monastery and not just the latrine. See Scott G. Bruce, “Lurking with Spiritual Intent: A Note on the Origin and Functions of the Monastic Roundsman (*Circulator*)”, *Revue bénédictine* 109 (1999): 75–89.

a confirmed time and place for everything, and in which (at least in theory) the permission of superiors was required for even the simplest of activities. Martha Bayless has described this as a “chastity of excretion.”³⁹

Ascetic Ideals and Toilet Habits

The next topic for exploration is whether monastic drinking and eating habits may have affected their toilet habits and attitudes toward them. One way of approaching this problem may be to look closely at the monastic discussions of nocturnal emissions (wet dreams), which are useful for finding clues about attitudes toward other kinds of body functions. The construction of an overall theological understanding of nocturnal emissions is visible in early texts and shows clearly in Carolingian monastic commentaries. Discussions about nocturnal emissions have the advantage of appearing in many monastic texts and being gendered exclusively male.⁴⁰ They are also associated with night-time, a period when monastic authors often discussed excretion, and were directly associated with bodily cleanliness and ritual purity as well as with the privy. I want to argue that the attitude monastic commentators displayed toward nocturnal emissions provides an important connection to attitudes about urination and defecation.

From the third century onward, ecclesiastical authors discussed nocturnal emissions by debating whether they were a symptom of lust or an involuntary physical reaction with no attendant moral qualities. This conversation was heavily overlaid with Augustinian overtones. Augustine of Hippo, arguing for the freedom of the human will, had used the word *necessitas* to imply that which was inevitable and not under a person’s control.⁴¹ Most authors argued that if nocturnal emissions were involuntary, they were morally blameless. The question was important because the authors wanted to know, especially, whether a man who had had a wet dream could take or administer communion afterward with a clear

³⁹ Bayless, *Sin and Filth in Medieval Culture: The Devil in the Latrine* (see note 5), 50.

⁴⁰ Dyan Elliott, *Fallen Bodies: Pollution, Sexuality and Demonology in the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 15. See also the earlier version of this section: Dyan Elliott, “Pollution, Illusion, and Masculine Disarray: Nocturnal Emissions and the Sexuality of the Clergy,” *Constructing Medieval Sexuality*, ed. Karma Lochrie, Peggy McCracken, and James A. Schultz. Medieval Cultures 11 (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 1–23.

⁴¹ Augustine of Hippo, *On Free Will*, quoted in William L. Rowe, “Augustine on Foreknowledge and Free Will,” *The Review of Metaphysics* 18.2 (December 1, 1964): 356–63; here 358.

conscience.⁴² The dominant ecclesiastical view was that nocturnal emissions were involuntary unless accompanied by lascivious dreams or lustful thoughts. For Athanasius of Alexandria, sleep separated the will from the body, and thus anything that happened during sleep was involuntary.⁴³ Athanasius's opinions about the involuntary nature of nocturnal emissions harkens back strongly to the phrase *necessitas naturae*, monks' favorite euphemism for body function. If the body operated without will, then no sinful motives could be attached to the results. Certainly no amount of will, however strong, could keep you from having to urinate once your bladder was full.

Not everyone, of course, argued a point of view this liberal. David Brakke has shown that early writers on nocturnal emissions were heavily influenced by Greco-Roman medical authorities such as Soranus, who were concerned with them primarily because they worried about dangerous health effects from too-frequent orgasm.⁴⁴ Moderation in all things, counseled late ancient doctors, would benefit the spirit as well as the body.⁴⁵ The Christian ethic of moderation suggested that repressing the urges of the body freed the soul for spiritual growth. St. Anthony, for example, viewed many of the functions of the body as springing from "natural, inherent movement, which does not operate unless the soul consents," implying a connection to the necessary quality emphasized in other sources. For Anthony, however, even inevitable occurrences required reason and control in order to reap spiritual benefit.⁴⁶ Controlling what one's body produced must, therefore, have been a function of the control of the appetite, easily equated with moderation in diet.

John Cassian, a fifth-century writer whose version of ascetic practice was extremely influential during the Carolingian era, advised strict control of bodily habits to suppress not only nocturnal emissions but the strong emotions that

⁴² David Brakke, "The Problematization of Nocturnal Emissions in Early Christian Syria, Egypt and Gaul," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 3.4 (1995): 419–60; here 420.

⁴³ Brakke, "The Problematization of Nocturnal Emissions" (see note 42), 443–44.

⁴⁴ Brakke, "The Problematization of Nocturnal Emissions" (see note 42), 423–24.

⁴⁵ See Ludwig Edelstein, "The Dietetics of Antiquity." *Ancient Medicine: Selected Papers of Ludwig Edelstein*, ed. Owsei Temkin and C. Lilian Temkin (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1967), 303–16; here 311–16.

⁴⁶ Although Anthony's first letter is clearly centered around sexual arousal, bodily function must have fallen under his definition of "natural and inherent." *The Letters of St. Anthony: Monasticism and the Making of a Saint*, ed. Samuel Rubenson (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1995), 70, 199.

led to all kinds of lust.⁴⁷ He advised a limited diet of two loaves of bread a day, sleep of three or four hours per night, and only just enough water to satisfy.⁴⁸ He linked these limitations to the calming of excessive emotion. Even so, Cassian regarded nocturnal emissions as inevitable – they could be reduced, but not entirely avoided, for overcoming them completely was *supra naturam*.⁴⁹ It was such a battle that he even advised that lead plates strapped over the kidneys at night could “inhibit the obscene humors.”⁵⁰

To tie these ascetic pieces of advice to urination and defecation, it is first worth noting that ascetic behaviors, depending on their stringency, might have secondary effects on the digestive system that would affect excretion. Antony, according to his biographers, ate only every few days. “When his human condition forced him to allow his poor body some food or sleep or any other necessities of nature, he was overcome by an extraordinary sense of shame because the physical limitations of his poor body restricted his spiritual freedom.”⁵¹ Cassian’s suggestion to limit water and food would have affected digestion for those who took his injunctions seriously. Not surprisingly, Cassian’s exhortations to personal control also extended to a strict understanding of authority within the monastery. He wrote, “The junior monk must be imbued with such strict obedience to the rule that without the permission of his senior he does not presume, not only to leave his cell, but even by his own authority to satisfy a need of nature.”⁵²

47 On Cassian, in addition to Brakke, “The Problematization of Nocturnal Emissions,” see Conrad Leyser, “Masculinity in Flux: Nocturnal Emission and the Limits of Chastity in the Early Middle Ages,” *Masculinity in Medieval Europe*, ed. D. M. Hadley (London: Longman, 1999), 103–20; Elliott, *Fallen Bodies: Pollution, Sexuality and Demonology in the Middle Ages* (see note 40), 16. Leyser points out that although Cassian’s instructions are often interpreted as being for monks, they would also have been perfectly appropriate for upper-class Christian men who wanted to lead a virtuous lifestyle.

48 John Cassian, *Collationes XII.15. Conférences*, ed. E. Pichery. 3 vols. *Sources chrétiennes*, 42, 54, 64 (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1958), vol. 2, 144.

49 “Quas sicut abscidere per omnia et in perpetuum amputare supra naturam est ...” John Cassian, *Institutiones*, VI.20. *Institutions cénobitiques*, ed. Jean-Claude Guy, *Sources chrétiennes* 109 (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1965), 286–89.

50 John Cassian, *Institutiones* VI.7. *Institutions cénobitiques*, 286–89.

51 Life of St. Antony, section 45. *Early Christian Lives*, trans., ed. and with an intro. by Carolinne White (New York: Penguin Classics, 1998), 36. See also section 6: “Sometimes he continued fasting for two or three days at a time and only took refreshment on the fourth day. He ate bread and salt and drank a little water,” p. 13.

52 John Cassian, *Institutiones* IV.10. *Institutions cénobitiques*, 132–35.

Smaragdus of St.-Mihiel quoted this approvingly in his own commentary on the Rule of Benedict in the early ninth century.⁵³

Monastic writers of later centuries, however, emphasized moderation in place of Cassian's stricter demands. Although he was strongly influenced by Cassian, the author of the Rule of the Master in the early sixth century was far less restrictive in his requirements than Cassian had been. He was very careful with regard to wine, which was a topic of concern for many monastic authors because of its humoral qualities (hot and wet) and ties to inebriation and lust.⁵⁴ The Master supplemented strictly rationed amounts of wine with must (pressed grape juice), usually warmed and mixed with juice from orach, a spinach-like leafy plant.⁵⁵ This "warm drink" seems to have made up a large part of what the brothers drank.⁵⁶ They were allowed three or four draughts from the communal cup in the summer, plus more for anyone who was still thirsty, which seems a moderate requirement. The Master, however, still cautioned against drinking too much water, warning that "Even an excess of water can intoxicate the spirit, causing phantasies in dreams, and plague the body with troubles, namely, throbbing of the veins, chills in the marrow, heaviness in the forehead, dizziness in the head, sleepiness in the eyes, continual sneezing in the nose."⁵⁷ Benedict also had moderate restrictions upon eating and drinking, but he warned that "No one is to presume to eat or drink before or after the time appointed."⁵⁸ Neither in the Rule of St. Benedict nor the Rule of the Master do we perceive the kind of asceticism that appears in Cassian, nor can we find a suggestion that their monks would have experienced less urination because of their drinking habits.

In these monastic rules, however, we can find an indication that monastic writers' attitudes toward food and eating shaped their attitudes toward indigestion, and from there to defecation. All monastic authors stressed the need for healthy monks to refrain from eating red meat, another response to the humoral

⁵³ Smaragdus of Saint-Mihiel, *Commentary on the Rule of St. Benedict*, trans. David Barry, Cistercian Studies, 212 (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 2007), 269.

⁵⁴ Benedict seems to be referencing the *Vitae Patrum* when he says "We read that monks should not drink wine at all." Rule of St. Benedict chapter 40. *RB 1980: The Rule of St. Benedict in Latin and English*, ed. Fry et al. (see note 2), 240–41.

⁵⁵ Rule of the Master chapter 27. *The Rule of the Master*, ed. Eberle (see note 21), 184–87.

⁵⁶ Rule of the Master chapter 27. *The Rule of the Master*, ed. Eberle (see note 21), 184–87.

⁵⁷ Rule of the Master chapter 27. *The Rule of the Master*, ed. Eberle (see note 21), 185.

⁵⁸ Rule of St. Benedict chapters 39 and 43. *RB 1980: The Rule of St. Benedict in Latin and English*, ed. Fry et al. (see note 2), 238–39, 244–45.

beliefs of the period.⁵⁹ They were also unanimous that too much food, or too rich food, was bad for the digestion and for the soul. Benedict strongly criticized over-eating, which he termed *crapula*:

Should it happen that the work is heavier than usual, the abbot may decide ... to grant something additional [to eat], provided that it is appropriate, and that above all *crapula* is avoided, lest a monk experience indigestion. For nothing is so inconsistent with the life of any Christian as *crapula* ...⁶⁰

To define *crapula*, Smaragdus of St-Mihiel cited Isidore of Seville, saying the word referred to “rich, uncooked food” that was bad for the health.⁶¹ “Uncooked” here may refer to the understanding of digestion that came from late antique authorities and was described in very similar terms by monastic authors throughout the Middle Ages. Isidore of Seville had described digestion as a process of cooking: the liver, which worked as a sort of Bunsen burner, heated the food in the stomach until it changed “the liquid that it has drawn to itself from food into blood, which it furnishes to individual limbs for sustenance and growth.” The intestines, Isidore explained, then passed the remains of the food out of the body.⁶² This cooking took time, as Benedict pointed out in his chapter 8, cautioning that the monks were liable to have upset stomachs if they rose for the night office with their food undigested.

The Master, even more dramatically, wrote that monks woken up too early for the night office “would not be so much roused as killed,” unable to commune with God because of their discomfort.⁶³ Hildemar of Civate explained that when a monk ate too much, “The fumes of the food rise up through the members and to the head, and because of this a man is weighed down; he will belch as though ill,

⁵⁹ Coon, *Dark Age Bodies: Gender and Monastic Practice in the Early Medieval West* (see note 37), 118.

⁶⁰ Rule of St. Benedict chapter 39. *RB 1980: The Rule of St. Benedict in Latin and English*, ed. Fry et al. (see note 2), 238–39.

⁶¹ Smaragdus of Saint-Mihiel, *Commentary on the Rule of St. Benedict* (see note 53), 409.

⁶² Isidore of Seville, *Etymologies* XI.i.125. *Isidore of Seville, Etymologies*, ed. Stephen A. Barney et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 239. See also William D. Sharpe, ed. *Isidore of Seville: the Medical Writings*, vol. 54, part 2, *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* new series (Philadelphia, PA: American Philosophical Society, 1964), 47. On Isidore’s medical knowledge and sources, see G. R. J. Fletcher, “St. Isidore of Seville and his Book on Medicine,” *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Medicine* 12 suppl. (1901): 70–95.

⁶³ Rule of the Master, chapter 33. *The Rule of the Master*, ed. Eberle (see note 21), 196.

and be rendered infirm, so that he cannot do anything good ...”⁶⁴ Thus the understanding of *crapula* functioned to contain and control the body both in its intake and by extension, its products.

Hildemar believed that his monks would function at a disadvantage in God’s service if they overate. That, too, could send them to the privy at the wrong time, especially in the night, when either the danger of demonic influence or the temptation of sexual lust might afflict them along with their intestinal discomfort. In a story in the *Casus Sancti Galli* by Ekkehard IV, the monks of St. Gall discovered Ruodman, the abbot of Reichenau, skulking in their latrine hoping to catch them at some kind of mischief. One of the junior monks became so incensed by the insult that he threatened to beat Ruodman with the monastery whip.⁶⁵ The implication here is that Rudoman was looking for sexual impropriety, but the criticism could also be broader – if the brothers were liable to stuff themselves with food, they might be found in the privy suffering the consequences. This motif – the suffering glutton crouched in pain on the privy – is present elsewhere in monastic literature. In Gregory of Tours’ *History of the Franks*, a treacherous priest died of dysentery for his sins: “while he was occupied in emptying his bowels he lost his soul instead.”⁶⁶

Medical Questions

It is worth noting that the monastic medical texts of this period frequently spoke of stomach complaints. The Plan of St. Gall contained a medicinal garden which included a brief schema of which plants it should contain, but the manuscript known as the *St. Gall Botanicus* has a much larger number of remedies.⁶⁷ Of the sixty-two herbal remedies contained in the *St. Gall Botanicus*, twenty-three were

⁶⁴ Hildemar of Civate, Commentary chapter 39, in Mittermüller, ed. *Expositio regulae ab Hildemaro tradita et nunc primum typis mandata* (see note 35), 438.

⁶⁵ Hans F. Haefele, ed., *Casus Sancti Galli/ St. Galler Klostergeschichten*. Ausgewählte Quellen zur Deutschen Geschichte des Mittelalters, 10 (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1980), 188–91.

⁶⁶ Gregory of Tours, *Historia Francorum* 2.23. *Gregory of Tours, The History of the Franks*, ed. Louis Thorpe (New York: Penguin, 1974), 135–7.

⁶⁷ The garden plan is very small and does not include most of the plants in the *Botanicus*. It is in the upper left corner of the original Plan of St. Gall: see The Plan of St. Gall Project, <http://www.stgallplan.org/recto.html>. The *St. Gall Botanicus* is St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, Codex Sangallensis 217, and is available online through the Virtual Manuscript Library of Switzerland: <http://www.e-codices.unifr.ch/en> (both last accessed on April 15, 2015).

recommended for some sort of digestive problems. The remedies included belladonna for spastic colon, wild strawberry for severe diarrhea, rue for constipation, and plantain which, the author wrote, “grandem virtutem habet” for complaints including indigestion, diarrhea, and vomiting.⁶⁸ In his poem called “The Little Garden,” the ninth-century monk Walahfrid Strabo recommended rue and horehound against poison, and fennel, agrimony and pennyroyal for upset stomach. He also advised celery and vinegar for the relief of the stomach, “that king of the body.”⁶⁹

A number of the herbal remedies that appear in early medieval documents are vermifuges, suggesting that intestinal worms may have been a problem for cloistered monks or their wider communities.⁷⁰ There is archaeological evidence for intestinal parasites in various locations throughout Europe in the Middle Ages. The most commonly found parasites are whipworm, roundworm, fish tapeworm, liver fluke, and beef or pork tapeworm. Pinworm, also known as threadworm, is highly contagious among people living in close quarters and is also likely to have been widespread, though it does not survive well in the archaeological record.⁷¹ Excavations in crusader-era Acre have also identified evidence of roundworm and fish tapeworm larvae in latrines used by crusaders.⁷²

⁶⁸ Monica Niederer, ed., *Der St. Galler Botanicus: Ein frühmittelaltes Herbar. Kritische Edition, Übersetzung und Kommentar*. Lateinische Sprache und Literatur des Mittelalters, 38 (Bern and New York: Peter Lang, 2005), 70–72, 74–77, 104, 22.

⁶⁹ Walahfrid Strabo, “Hortulus,” trans. R. Payne. *Medieval Medicine: A Reader*, ed. Faith Wallis, Readings in Medieval Civilizations and Cultures, 15 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 98–109.

⁷⁰ The *St. Gall Botanicus* shows some influence from the popular herbal known as Pseudo-Apuleius, of which there are many late antique copies, but less direct influence from other best-sellers of the early period such as Dioscorides and Cassius Felix. Twenty-five manuscripts or fragments of Apuleius have been identified before the twelfth century. On Apuleius, see L. E. Voigts, “The significance of the name Apuleius to the Herbarium Apulei,” *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 52 (1978): 214–26. Manuscripts of Dioscorides were also available; there are two manuscripts in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, both dating from the 9th century. See also R. W. T. Gunther, ed., *The Herbal of Apuleius Barbarus* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1925), xix–xx; F. W. T. Hunger, ed., *The Herbal of Pseudo-Apuleius: from the 9th century Manuscript in the Abbey of Monte Cassino (Codex Casinensis 97)* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 1935).

⁷¹ Evilena Anastasiou, “Parasites in European Populations from Prehistory to the Industrial Revolution,” *Sanitation, Latrines and Intestinal Parasites in Past Populations*, ed. Piers D. Mitchell (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2015), 203–217; here 209–12.

⁷² Piers D. Mitchell, Evilena Anastasios, and Danny Syon, “Human Intestinal Parasites in Crusader Acre: Evidence for Migration with Disease in the Medieval Period,” *International Journal of Paleopathology* 1.3–4 (2011): 132–7.

Monasteries that did not have the elegant and sophisticated water systems evident in the high Middle Ages at places like St. Augustine's Canterbury or Clairvaux relied on cesspits that had to be cleared periodically by hand. This was certainly the case for landlocked monasteries like Battle Abbey, which had no access to running water and used a stone-flagged drain that emptied into a cesspit.⁷³ If cesspits contaminated local soil or water supplies, and especially if human waste was used as a fertilizer in monastery gardens, early medieval monks may have suffered considerably from intestinal parasites. Unfortunately, the archaeological record does not yet answer that question.⁷⁴ If medieval monks were subject to the same conditions as their non-monastic counterparts, however, it is very likely that they suffered the same kinds of discomfort.

Conclusion

It is possible to learn something about how medieval monks felt about their bodily functions from the sources available to us. Monastic rule writers of the early Middle Ages moderated the punitive discourse of the early ascetic writers. Concern for both physical and spiritual health dominated monastic opinions about normal body functions. Body functions could not be avoided, making them natural and necessary. As such, according to some authors, they were not subject to the will and were therefore not directly related to sin. But the *necessitas naturae* could be regimented, controlled, and moralized; and the wide gaze of monastic officials of the Carolingian period must have included the privy, not just for its sexual dangers, but for its natural purposes.

⁷³ J. Patrick Greene, *Medieval Monasteries* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1992), 12–14.

⁷⁴ Allan R. Hall and Harry K. Kenward, “Sewers, Cesspits and Middens: A Survey of the Evidence for 2000 Years of Waste Disposal in York, UK,” *Sanitation, Latrines and Intestinal Parasites in Past Populations*, ed. Piers D. Mitchell (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2015), 99–119; here 109, 115. See also Bond, “Water Management in the Rural Monastery” (see note 1), 91–97, and “Water Management in the Urban Monastery” (see note 1), 69–71. According to Bond, “Water Management in the Urban Monastery,” p. 70, the earliest mention of a monastery diverting a water course for sanitary purposes is ca. 960 at the monastery of Abingdon.

James L. Smith

Caring for the Body and Soul with Water: Guerric of Igny's *Fourth Sermon on the Epiphany*, Godfrey of Saint-Victor's *Fons Philosophiae*, and Peter of Celle's Letters

Introduction¹

The use of water as an expressive trope of spiritual hygiene was widespread among monastic writers of the twelfth century, adapted for different uses in different genres. Aqueous imagery was particularly frequent within allegories or didactic *figurae* exploring the care of the soul as if it were a material body, with a constitution that could be promoted or damaged, and a set of behaviors for the encouragement of good health on all levels of Christian life. For monastics, the imagery of bodily cleanliness was an important tool that encouraged a holistic view of the monk as a physical and spiritual being shaped by a life of monastic vows. The moral *topoi* discussed in this essay, expressed in different registers by three very different monastic genres, mapped out multi-faceted guides to behavior and self-examination in which health was holistic – the body and the soul combined. This article is an expansion of an existing essay on the rhetorical *topos* of spiritual nutrition, and its argument that extremes such as hunger or satiety, cleanliness or dirt, exist as part of a multifaceted vocabulary.²

I turn to Aelred of Rievaulx for an introductory vignette to this essay that illuminates the necessity of a rich monastic vocabulary of abstract and inner health. In a potent sermon, Aelred demonstrated the facility of powerful spiritual allegory when admonishing his fellow Cistercians to treat their souls as entities worthy of a form of abstracted agriculture:

¹ For more on the topic of this essay, see James L. Smith, *Water in Medieval Intellectual Culture: Case-Studies from Twelfth-Century Monasticism*. Cursor Mundi, 30 (Turnhout: Brepols, forthcoming 2017).

² James L. Smith, “So the satiated man hungers, the drunken thirsts”: The Medieval Rhetorical Topos of Spiritual Nutrition,” *Limina* 20.3 (2015): 1–17.

Ergo, fratres, si et nos uoluerimus ut in nostro corde habitet iste Adam, praeparemus ei paradisum ibi. Sit terra cordis nostri fertilis et fecunda, abundans uirtutibus, quasi spiritualibus arboribus. Sit ibi Spiritus, scilicet fons indeficiens, qui nos irriget spirituali gratia, compunctione, deuotione et omni spirituali dulcedine. Sint ibi istae quattuor uirtutes, quasi quattuor flumina, quae nos abluant ab omni sorde uitiorum et faciant puros et immaculatos, ut possimus esse apti ad amplexus Domini nostri.

[If we should wish, my brothers, to have this [second] Adam [Jesus Christ] dwell in our heart, we must there prepare a paradise for him. May the soil of our heart be fertile and fecund, abounding in virtues like spiritual trees. May the Spirit be there, like a never-failing fountain which irrigates us spiritually with grace, devotion, and all sorts of spiritual delight. May the four virtues be there, like four rivers which wash us clean of all the grime of vice and render us unsullied and unstained. All this so that we may be fit for the Lord's embrace!]³

In Aelred's formulation, cultivating the soul also cultivates salvation, a purifying of the inner landscape to resemble the superlative space of paradise. The cleansing effects of salvific knowledge and engagement with the teachings of Scripture were the ultimate expression of spiritual hygiene, an ongoing purification of the inner landscape. The processes of dietetics, bathing, and self-care were not only a visible companion to more abstract ministrations, but an important part of monastic life. Twelfth-century monastic bathing was encouraged as a hygienic practicality, eschewing the extremes of earlier practitioners.⁴

Paolo Squarriti explores the history of bathing in early medieval Italy, highlighting the separation of social and hygienic bathing, with public communal baths giving way to semi-private monastic bathing and eventually private bathing as concerns about water's "voluptuousness" grew.⁵ By the twelfth century, there was a clear distinction between bathing for cleanliness and for pleasure. The former was good for monks, the latter an attachment to worldly pleasures. Thus it is purity and health, rather than pleasure, that were valorized in the act of monastic bathing; when my three monastic writers discuss pleasure in the context of cleanliness; it is pleasure at cleanliness and spiritual purity over pleasure in the

³ Aelredus Rieualensis, *Sermones Sermones I*, CLXXXII, coll. Claraeualensis secunda, sermo 39 (in annuntiatione Domini), 18, Brepols Library of Latin Texts A (LLT-A). Aelred of Rievaulx, Sermon 39:18, as cited in *Aelred of Rievaulx: Pursuing Perfect Happiness*, trans. John R. Sommerfeldt (Mahwah: NJ, Newman Press, 2005), 122–23.

⁴ For a discussion of bathing in a Cistercian context, see Terry N. Kinder, *Cistercian Europe: Architecture of Contemplation* (Cambridge, UK: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2002), 138–39.

⁵ Paolo Squarriti, *Water and Society in Early Medieval Italy, 400–1000* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 59–60.

act of bathing itself.⁶ As Elizabeth Archibald has demonstrated, however, bathing for health and pleasure was widely practiced outside of the cloister.⁷ Several essays in this volume expand on this topic, as does the introduction.⁸

Linked Spaces and Qualities

Tropes of moral hygiene are difficult to pin down, and their manifestations are many. However, one thing is consistent: attending to the purity of the body leads to an abstract vocabulary for the care of the soul. When he describes a garden for Christ within the soul, Aelred is making a recursive link between environment and abstraction, material cultivation and spiritual cultivation. This is a facet of a wider trope: the soul was the cloister; and the monastery a kind of garden-city spanning Genesis and Revelation, existing as a vehicle of transcendence in which material acts took on a profound and layered significance.⁹ For Aelred, water that nourished the inner landscape came from good spiritual health, the imagery of the garden providing a vocabulary of inner cultivation. The study of medieval landscapes is, as Ellen Arnold puts it, the study of “how nature informed cultural metaphors, how it shaped the monks’ religious identity, and how religious culture in turn influenced how the monks acted in their landscape, and used their resources.”¹⁰

Through the linking of monastic and inner space, the actions of monks could be meaningful in their daily rituals and acts, but also within the spaces in which the inner life was enacted. Conversely, their inner struggles, exegetic speculations, and devotions could bring meaning to their daily management of the landscape. The waters that nourished the soul were present within the material

⁶ For more on this topic, see Belle Tuten’s article in this volume, entitled “The ‘Necessitas Naturae’ and Monastic Hygiene.”

⁷ Elizabeth Archibald, “Did Knights have Baths?: The Absence of Bathing in Middle English Romances,” *Cultural Encounters in the Romance of Medieval England*, ed. Corinne Saunders (Cambridge, UK: D.S. Brewer, 2005), 101–16.

⁸ See the editor’s introduction, and the essays in this volume by Rosa A. Perez, entitled “Troubled Waters: Bathing and Illicit Relations in *Equitan* and *Flamenca*”; and Albrecht Classen, entitled “The ‘Dirty Middle Ages’: Bathing and Cleanliness in Medieval German Courtly Romances: Another Myth Buster” for new work on the topic of courtly bathing.

⁹ For an interesting contribution to this *topos*, see William A. McClung, *The Architecture of Paradise: Survivals of Eden and Jerusalem* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1983).

¹⁰ Ellen F. Arnold, *Negotiating the Landscape: Environment and Monastic Identity in the Medieval Ardennes* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 3.

landscape, and vice versa.¹¹ As a result, monastic rhetoric gave monasteries the power to heal through a combination of physical amenity and spiritual cleansing.¹² In an anonymous twelfth-century description of Clairvaux, for example, the grounds of the monastery cleanse and heal the ailing spirit:

Sedet aegrotus cespite in viridi, et cum inclemencia canicularis immitti sidere terras excoquit, et siccat flumina, ipse in securitatem et absconsonem et umbraculum diei ab aestu, fronde sub arborea ferventia temperat astra: et ad doloris sui solatium, naribus suis gramineae redolent species. Pascit oculos herbarum et arborum amoena viriditas, et pendentes ante se, atque crescentes immensae ejus deliciae, ut non immerito dicat: Sub umbra arboris illius, quam desideraveram, sedi, et fructus ejus dulcis gutturi meo.

[The sick man sits on the green turf, and, when the merciless heat of the dog days bakes the fields and dries up the streams, he in his sanctuary, shaded from the day's heat, filters the heavenly fire through a screen of leaves, his discomfort further eased by the drifting scent of the grasses. While he feeds his gaze on the pleasing green of grass and trees, fruits, to further his delight, hang swelling before his eyes, so that he cannot inaptly say "I sat in the shadow of his tree, which I had desired, and its fruit was sweet to my taste."]¹³

Quoting the *Song of Songs*, the anonymous narrator of the abbey and its grounds has evoked all of the classic elements of the paradisiacal garden. Even when the landscape is parched and dry, the garden of the abbey evokes a bountiful *locus amoenus* of the soul. The monastic landscape, fed by the nurturing Aube, creates a redeemed space shaped by the imagining of its inhabitants. The curative properties of monastic life appear again in William of Saint Thierry's account, in which William claims that "[at Clairvaux] the insane recover their reason, and although their outward man is worn away, inwardly they are born again."¹⁴

¹¹ For an extended discussion of this trope, see Smith, "Water as Medieval Intellectual Entity" (see note 1).

¹² For more on this topic in an early medieval context, see the essays in this volume by Warren Tormey, entitled "Treating the Condition of 'Evil' in the Anglo-Saxon Herbals"; and Daniel F. Pigg, entitled "Bald's *Leechbook* and the Construction of Male Health in Anglo-Saxon England."

¹³ "Descriptio Positionis seu Situationis Monasterii Claraevallensis," *Patrologia Latina*, Vol. 185, 569, *Patrologia Latina: The full text database* (Anne Arbor, MI: ProQuest, 2012), 569B–C. "A Description of Clairvaux," in *The Cistercian World: Monastic Writings of the Twelfth Century*, trans. Pauline Matarasso (London: Penguin Classics, 1993), 287–92; here 287–88.

¹⁴ "William of Saint Thierry: A Description of Clairvaux ca. 1143," *A Source Book of Mediaeval History: Documents Illustrative of European Life and Institutions from the German Invasions to the Renaissance*, trans. Frederick Austin Ogg and Jerome S. Arkenberg (New York: American Book Co., 1907), 258–60, Internet Medieval Sourcebook, <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/1143clairvaux.asp>, 1998 (last accessed May 20, 2016), no page.

Water was the agent for cleansing and ritual purification, and took on an important resonance. The spiritual effect of water in quotidian life was paired with the healing effect of salvific waters on the soul. The two worked in concert, and it is impossible to separate or distinguish between the healing of the body and the healing of the soul. Hildegard of Bingen (d. 1179) claimed that, “it is through the little brook springing from stones in the east that other bubbling waters are washed clean, for it flows more swiftly. Besides, it is more useful than the other waters because there is no dirt in it.”¹⁵ Attention to Christ, a spiritual East to match the material east of Eden, had a corresponding effect. Impurities were purged from the waters of the world by superlative principles embodied in Christ, introduced through baptism and emulated through his example; contemplating this reality sharpened one’s powers of imagination, and brought about its realization in the next life.¹⁶

Hildegard, like many of her contemporaries, understood the powerful link between the cleansing powers of water, and the corresponding curation and purification of the soul. For her, water was the bridge between categories of temporal existence that, despite their seemingly disparate nature, could be traced back to the primordial source of things by shared pathways. The force of similarity in the formation of medieval abstractions can easily be overemphasized, but it was the causation of similarity that gave meaning to likeness for medieval thinkers, and thus resemblance formed a bond stronger than what we moderns derive from a simile. To say that something is “like” another thing is a semiotic shortcut in the twenty-first century, a figure of speech, but it was a truth claim in the twelfth. Caroline Walker Bynum points to the classical trope of “like from like” prevalent within medieval thinking. As she describes it, “like is generated from like, like returns to like, like knows like via likeness.”¹⁷

Thus, to draw on the resemblance of two things is to make a claim as to a hidden but true structure within Creation. The secrets of the Sun’s rays, of the tides, of the trembling of the earth: all of these things were the essence of God writ large across the face of the earth. Everything was known to have a divine meaning, although it was obscured by a façade of nature, encapsulated within

¹⁵ Hildegard of Bingen’s *Book of Divine Works*, trans. Matthew Fox (Santa Fe, NM: Bear and Co., 1987), 292. For more discussion of Hildegard’s treatment of water for healing and spiritual transformations, together with a nuanced examination of aqueous attributes, see Debra L. Stoudt’s contribution to this volume, entitled “Elemental Well-Being: Water and Its Attributes in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Period.”

¹⁶ Willemien Otten, *From Paradise to Paradigm: A Study of Twelfth-Century Humanism* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 25–26.

¹⁷ Caroline Walker Bynum, *Metamorphosis and Identity* (New York: Zone Books, 2001), 24.

an *integumentum*. Interrogating such an object required a “natural question,” as the title of a treatise by Adelard of Bath (*Quaestiones naturales*) implies.¹⁸ Thus, everything within nature was, by its provenance, imbued with the essence of its divine source. “There, marked down by the finger of the Supreme Scribe,” wrote Bernard Silvestris in his *Cosmographia*, “can be read the text of time, the fated march of events, the disposition made of the ages.”¹⁹ To Bernard, “The sky is like a book with its pages spread out plainly, containing the future in secret letters.”²⁰ Speculation upon these links was, in the words of Robert Javelet, a vision of the truth navigated “by the mediation of likenesses.”²¹ The use of exegesis within sermons, didactic texts and spiritual works relied heavily on typology, a deployment of likeness familiar to medievalists in diverse forms. Likeness went beyond biblical links, however, drawing on similarities within the natural world. Dale Coulter describes the hermeneutic effects of these likenesses upon the arts of memory and composition as an escalating process of meditation upon the links from the visible to the invisible. As Coulter puts it, “the mental image is itself a reflection of the created object. As such the mind can begin to meditate upon it and to investigate its various features. Investigation of individual features prepares the mind to extract analogies that serve as windows into other realities.”²²

My case studies explore the self-expression of three twelfth-century monastic figures: the Cistercian preacher-abbot Guérard of Igny; the Victorine canon regular Godfrey of Saint-Victor; and the letter-writing Benedictine abbot Peter of Celle. The essay will also explore three forms of monastic literary expression: one a sermon with a deft use of allegory; one a rhyming didactic poem exploring and teaching the seven liberal arts as a river system; and one a corpus of letters embedded in scriptural allegories and spiritual metaphors of cleansing, refreshment and health.

¹⁸ See Adelard of Bath: *Conversations with his Nephew*, *On the Same and the Different*, *Questions on Natural Science* and *On Birds*, trans. Charles Burnett. Cambridge Medieval Classics, 9 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

¹⁹ Bernard Silvestris, as cited in Marie-Dominique Chenu, *Nature, Man, and Society in the Twelfth Century: Essays on New Theological Perspectives in the Latin West* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 117.

²⁰ Bernard Silvestris, *Cosmographia* 2.1.3 as cited in Robert Bartlett, *The Natural and the Supernatural in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 39.

²¹ As cited and translated in Dale M. Coulter, “Contemplation as ‘Speculation’: A Comparison of Boethius, Hugh of St. Victor, and Richard of St. Victor,” *From Knowledge to Beatitude: St. Victor, Twelfth-Century Scholars, and Beyond – Essays in Honour of Grover A. Zinn Jr.*, ed. E. Ann Matter and Lesley Smith (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2013), 204–28; here 205.

²² Coulter, “Contemplation as ‘Speculation’” (see note 21), 224.

The True Jordan: Guerric of Igny's *Fourth Sermon on the Epiphany*

The hydrology of the medieval Holy Land – its rivers, seas, lakes, and springs – were an active site of a commodious and transferrable parable replicated across time and space. The bond between literal landscape, allegory, morality, and anagogy were tightly enmeshed. For Guerric of Igny in his *Fourth Sermon on the Epiphany*, the landscape of the Bible was a space of moral danger and hygiene made relevant to the faithful through the senses of Scripture.

Guerric (ca. 1070/80–1157) was born near Tournai and drawn to the Cistercian Order relatively late in life, growing into a preacher-abbot in the mould of Bernard of Clairvaux, his mentor.²³ Bernard had argued that to be a shepherd to the flock was to nourish them, just as Christ admonished Peter to “feed my lambs.”²⁴ Thus, as Hughes Oliphant Old puts it, “[the Cistercian sermon], its preparation, and its hearing were moulded by the monastic life, and more and more the sermon became the fruit of long meditation on the Scriptures.” Edited and cultivated for re-reading and reflection, sermon collections such as those inherited from Guerric became a crucial part of the Cistercian *lectio divina*.²⁵ After becoming abbot of Igny in the diocese of Rheims – daughter house of Clairvaux – in 1138, Guerric created 54 liturgical sermons before his death.²⁶ They reveal an adept preacher and master sermon-writer at work, lovingly embellished and curated for Cistercian reflections and devotional study.

Guerric launched into an acrobatic deployment of the new Cistercian devotional *ars praedicandi* in his fourth sermon; the force of his preaching was made possible by a body of water whose genus was one, and yet had manifold allegorical species.²⁷ The universal image of a river carrying salvation from Trinity to Creation was a grand pattern, and interacting with its waters through manifestations such as the earthly river Jordan enabled immersion in a healing salvific force. On the occasion of the Epiphany, the fourth sermon explores the theme of

²³ Hughes Oliphant Old, *The Reading and Preaching of the Scriptures in the Worship of the Christian Church*. Vol. 3, The Medieval Church (Cambridge: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999), 284.

²⁴ John 21:15–16, Douay-Rheims translation of the Latin Vulgate.

²⁵ Old, *The Reading and Preaching of the Scriptures* (see note 23), 284.

²⁶ Bernard McGinn, *The Growth of Mysticism: Gregory the Great Through the 12th Century*. The Presence of God: A History of Western Christian Mysticism, 2 (New York: Crossroad, 1996), 277.

²⁷ For a detailed study, see Kilian McDonnell, *The Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan: The Trinitarian and Cosmic Order of Salvation* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1996).

Christ's baptism through the theme of Naaman of Syria, the leper King healed by the waters of the Jordan.²⁸ In that episode, the King refuses to come to the Jordan and immerse himself seven times, as advised by the prophet Elisha, arguing proudly that the waters of his own land were just as fitting. Guerric takes this as an opportunity to reflect on the wonder of Christ's seminal immersion in the waters, and the revelation of Christ the Son. He plays on scriptural material that traces interactions with the literal river in the Holy Land, and maps them onto the allegorical, moral, and anagogic senses through deft exegesis. By discussing the river that baptized Christ as a site of moral purity and transference, the sermon gives abstract cleanliness and contamination a material form. Just as Christ as man gave a human form to the Trinity, so too does his baptism give spiritual force to interactions with water. As Tertullian admonishes in *De Baptismo*,

Ne quis ergo dicat: “numquid ipsis [enim] aquis tinguimur quae tunc in primordio fuerunt”? non utique ipsis, si non ex ea parte ipsis qua genus quidem unum, species uero conplures; quod autem generi adtributum est etiam in species redundat.

[Let no one [...] object, “But are we then baptized in those same waters which were there in the beginning?” Not those very same – yet still the same, to the extent that the species is one, though there are many individual instances, and that which has become an attribute of the species overflows into the individuals.]²⁹

Within the localized traits of the landscape in which Christianity was born – its spaces, sites, and environment – an archetype for the valence of water was spread and multiplied within the properties of all waters. This dispersal of religious symbolism, like the distribution of water across the face of the earth, reveals much about medieval material imagination and typological transferability of the Holy Land. The river Jordan represented a cultural flow of history, time, and narrative that surrounded and encapsulated the diverse *loci* of the Judeo-Christian tradition. The definitive nature of Christ's life within the typological arrangements of Christian thought patterned the global waters with the imprint of his bodily immersion and baptism, and yet preserved the name “Jordan” as the title by which this universal principle would be imagined. As Thomas Aquinas put it,

28 2 Kings 5.

29 Tertullianus, *De Baptismo*, Ch 4, lines 11-13, Brepols Library of Latin Texts A (LLT-A). Tertullian, *On Baptism*, 4:10, in *Tertullian's Homily on Baptism*, the text ed. with an intro., trans. and commentary by Ernest Evans (London: S.P.C.K., 1964), 11.

“the power of Christ flowed into all waters not because of physical continuity, but because of likeness of species.”³⁰

Preaching the Jordan

Through the power of typological links, the activities of the Jordan described within Scripture spread beyond their context. In Guerric’s sermon-writing, we see these links deployed to create a powerful rhetoric of spiritual ontology in which physical and spiritual cleanliness and realization are compared and contrasted for the purposes of spiritual edification. The lowly state of the fallen soul is likened to a debasement of the body, its remedy it linked to a new baptism through immersion in Christ:

Ecce fratres qui primi gratiam baptismatis tantis uolutati sordibus amisimus ecce uerum iordanem descensum scilicet humilium ubi pie rebaptizari licet inuenimus. Hoc tantum est ut non parcamus nobis de die in diem descendere profundius et plenius mergi christo que penitus consepeliri.

[We have lost the grace of our first baptism by wallowing in [...] filth: behold the true Jordan, that is the descent of the humble, in which we find that we may be devoutly rebaptized. All that is required is that we should not be reluctant to go down day by day more deeply, be submerged more completely, and be wholly buried together with Christ.]³¹

The “true Jordan,” as discrete from the historical river Jordan, was the nexus point of properties introduced into the global hydrological cycle by sacred interactions with the waters of the Holy Land. By living a spiritual life in Christ, the material interactions with water that characterized monastic existence could purify body and soul alike. Those who refused to participate in its cleansing force were Naaman, capable of worldly riches and status, but stricken with a leprosy of the spirit. Without intent, the action was meaningless. The true river Jordan (spiritual purification) was superior to all of the waters of Damascus (worldly ambitions):

³⁰ St. Thomas Aquinas *Summa Theologiae*, Vol. 56, ed. David Bourke (London: Blackfriars and Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1974), 3.66.4, 17.

³¹ Guerricus Ignaciensis, *Sermones*, SChr 166, “In epiphania Domini 4,” 304, lines 226–229, Brepols Library of Latin Texts A (LLT-A). “The Fourth Sermon for the Epiphany,” in *Guerric of Igny: Liturgical Sermons*, Vol. 1, translated by the Monks of Mount Saint Bernard Abbey (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1970), 98. This section plays on 2 Kings 5:14, “[Naaman] went down, and washed in the Jordan seven times: according to the word of the man of God [Elisha], and his flesh was restored, like the flesh of a little child, and he was made clean.”

O uos naaman syri non enim unus sed innumeri o inquam diuites sed leprosi superbi sed criminosi quare tam uehementer abhorretis lauari his medicinalibus aquis. Cur uobis ita uiluit noster iste iordanis p[re]a fluuiis damasci. Dicitis enim si forte quaerentibus aliquando consilium salutis imitanda praedicetur humilitas et paupertas christi: numquid non meliores sunt fluuii damasci omnibus aquis israel ut lauer in eis et munder. Numquid non melius est et ad purgationem peccatorum efficacius cotidie benefacere de affluentia mundi quam semel omnia relinquendo pauperem fieri.

[O you, Naamans of Syria, for it is not a question of one man but of countless; O you rich but lepers, proud but sinful, why do you feel so vehement a repugnance to wash in these healing waters? Why does this Jordan of ours seem of such little account in comparison with the rivers of Damascus?³² For when you happen to seek some salutary advice and you are told to imitate Christ's humility and poverty, you say: "Are not the rivers of Damascus better than all the waters of Israel for me to wash in them and be cleansed?" Is it not better and more efficacious for the purifying of sins to make benefactions daily from one's worldly wealth rather than leave everything once and for all and become poor?]³³

Worldly achievements, conversely, were a polluted source, a breeder of spiritual malaise. The experience of corporeal health, be it that of the pure or the leper, the humble or the proud, maps onto diverse Christian spiritual ontologies with ease. The capacious nature of the body as a map of spiritual experience proves its worth to Guerric. Cleanliness without humility is like a divine cure without the healing power of the Jordan; the process of purification alone is not enough, and the correct nexus between salvific force and worldly water is required. The cause of the affliction, the World, could not be its cure:

Damascus secundum nomen suum ciuitas sanguinis est et aquae eius sanguine mixtae sunt quia opera etiam bona carnalium et saecularium uix a quocumque peccato pura sunt. Et quomodo id quod infectum est sanguine sanguinem mundabit. Qua ratione lepram id quod leprosum est curabit.

[The name Damascus means "city of blood" and its waters are mixed with blood, for even the good deeds of carnal and worldly men are hardly pure of all sin. And how shall that which is contaminated by blood cleanse blood: In what way shall what is leprous cure leprosy.]³⁴

The "true Jordan" was present not only in the river that gave it a name, but in an ecumenical principle of universal immersion in salvation, an abstraction of

³² 2 Kings 5:12.

³³ "In epiphania Domini 4," 298, lines 145–51, Brepols LLT-A. Guerric of Igny, "The Fourth Sermon for the Epiphany" (see note 31), 95.

³⁴ "In epiphania Domini 4," 298, lines 155–58. Guerric of Igny, "The Fourth Sermon for the Epiphany" (see note 31), 95.

Christ's seminal baptism. Through the intervention of the Holy Spirit, the human body of Christ was able to bond heavenly and worldly waters through the mediating bond of their likeness. The rivers of Damascus, tainted with worldly sin, could never truly cleanse. The ability of water to carry the sacrament of baptism allowed the link between bodily and spiritual cleansing – a physical act (human bodily interaction with water) could bring with it a more powerful cleansing (spiritual interaction with the Trinity through the Holy Spirit). Hugh of Saint-Victor described it as “superadded institution,” an addition of meaning infused into water by Christ’s baptism in which “the Saviour came and instituted visible water through the ablution of bodies to signify the invisible cleaning of souls through spiritual grace.”³⁵

Through its participation in the Old and New Testaments, the historical river became a hermeneutic vehicle for the hydrological narrative of salvation, the passing of the salvific power of the Holy Spirit into the waters through Christ’s baptism by John. Scripture was, as Henri De Lubac puts it, the power that caused living water to well up within the interior landscape, to show the unity of the source and to advocate a drawing of water from inner reservoirs.³⁶

The Holy Land was a repository of divine valence *par excellence*. The density of its intersections with scriptural history, Old and New Testaments alike, had created an intellectual entity that could never be imagined wholly in terms of its historical dimension. Like other densely connected symbols of Christian typology, the Jordan provided a singular image for the plurality of baptism. The power of water as genus, as ur-principle, continued its reduplication in the species. Patristic writings on the subject set a precedent of scriptural interpretation and liturgical convention that would continue to flow through the later intellectual traditions of the Middle Ages. In essence, the salvific power of water was not confined in one locus, but distributed throughout the waters of the world, as Tertullian claimed, “it makes no matter whether one is washed in the sea or in a pond, a river or a fountain, a cistern or a tub.”³⁷ Despite the ecumenical efficacy of water in the symbolism of baptism, it was the Jordan that held the unique power of serving as a historical linkage. The waters of a single, discrete, material, and historical river were the site at which the universality baptism entered the world.

³⁵ Roy J. Deferrari, *Hugh of Saint Victor on the Sacraments of the Christian Faith* (Cambridge, MA: Medieval Academy of America, 1951), 155, as cited in Brian D. Spinks, *Early and Medieval Rituals and Theologies of Baptism: From the New Testament to the Council of Trent* (London: Routledge, 2006), 140.

³⁶ Henri De Lubac, *Medieval Exegesis: The Four Senses of Scripture*, Vol. 1 (1998; London: Continuum, 2000), 142.

³⁷ Tertullian, *On Baptism* (see note 29), 4:15, 11.

Before God mandated the miracle-working properties of the water, the oceans were imbued by the spirit of God at the beginning, and yet inactive in their power.

For Guerric, expounding upon a theme of moral hygiene for the occasion of the Epiphany opened up an opportunity to deploy the intellectual patterns of water. Through the intermingling of biblical and material, historical and abstract, the sermon reminds the audience of the process by which Christ's baptism imbued the universal waters of the "true Jordan" into the temporal world, a force revived through the sacrament of subsequent baptisms. By linking leprosy of the body to disease of the soul, and the relative merits of the waters to valences of spiritual behavior, Guerric reminded the faithful – and we moderns who take an interest in his sermons – of the power of spiritual hygiene as a complex allegory. His principle lesson in the context of this essay is that hydrology linked baptism to daily practice, making episodes of biblical history ever relevant, not only through typological resemblance but through a shared mechanism of nutritive force delivered through moral rectitude and ritual immersion.

Spiritual Dietetics: Godfrey of Saint-Victor and the *Fons Philosophiae*

Godfrey of Saint-Victor was a canon regular at the Abbey of Saint-Victor in Paris, the home to some of the most famous twelfth-century mixtures of the mystical and the scholarly tradition.³⁸ Eclipsed in our understanding of the Victorines by giants such as Hugh, Andrew or Richard, Godfrey has something to teach us about the themes of this essay. A schoolman and master of the liberal arts from approximately 1144–1155 prior to joining the Victorine order, Godfrey, according to Françoise Gasparri, studied and taught theology at the school of Petit-Pont founded by Adam of Balsham (called Adam *Parvipontanus*) in 1132.³⁹ Upon joining the order of canons at Saint-Victor Abbey in Paris in about 1155–1160, Godfrey turned his attention to creating a series of poems and treatises devoted to the cultivation of liberal arts wisdom and the mystical contemplation of human

³⁸ Notable examples are the *Didascalicon* of Hugh of Saint-Victor, a mixture of mystical and scholastic learning or the *De Trinitate* of Richard of Saint-Victor in which the author attempts to reconcile dogmatic theology and reason.

³⁹ Françoise Gasparri, "Philosophie Et Cosmologie: Godefroid De Saint-Victor," *Notre Dame de Paris: Un manifeste chrétien (1160–1230). Colloque organisé à l'Institut de France le vendredi 12 Décembre 2003*, ed. Michel Lemoine. *Rencontres Médiévales Européennes*, 4 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004), 119–44; here 120.

spirituality. In the tradition of his order, Godfrey was a schoolman, but also a mystic and metaphysician, exhibiting both the systematic intellectualism of a schoolmaster and the mystical emphasis of the Victorine order.⁴⁰

Philippe Delhaye, transcriber of Godfrey's *Microcosmus*, describes the text as a simple versified summary (*résumé versifié*) of Hugh's *Didascalicon*, a work more strongly related to Hugh than to his predecessor Richard.⁴¹ Gasparri has agreed with this assessment, arguing that although Godfrey was a contemporary of Richard, his ideas more closely reflect those of Hugh – the “Didascalic” tradition taught at the school at this time – with elements of Godfrey's exegetical liberal arts studies at Petit-Pont.⁴² As an eccentric rendering of a widely studied twelfth-century texts such as the *Didascalicon* and *Metalogicon*, the *Fons Philosophiae* offers an opportunity to study the role of what I characterize as a hydrological form serving as a framework for systematized Victorine – and twelfth-century scholastic – content. In the poem, Godfrey appears as a pilgrim searching for the sweet murmurs of water, driven forward by the guiding of the Paraclete. When he hears sweet murmurs, the pilgrim marvels at the many streams before him. Gazing upwards, he apprehends the distant source at the top of a lofty peak:⁴³

Emanabat uertice | montis fons illimis, Quem natura fecerat | a diebus primis, Uiae scaturiginis | inexhaustus nimis, Qui de summo decidens | influebat nimis.

[From the mountain's summit an unpolluted spring (*fons*) was flowing down, which nature had made in the earliest days; it was gushing, living, and inexhaustible. Coming down from the summit, it flowed to the lowest levels.]⁴⁴

40 R. N. Swanson, *The Twelfth-Century Renaissance* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), 19.

41 Philippe Delhaye, *Le Microcosmus De Godefroy De Saint-Victor: Étude Théologique* (Lille: Facultés Catholiques, 1951), 13.

42 Gasparri, “Philosophie Et Cosmologie” (see note 40), 120, 123.

43 For more on the epistemological qualities of mountains, see Albrecht Classen, “The Discovery of the Mountain as an Epistemological Challenge: A Paradigm Shift in the Approach to Highly Elevated Nature. Petrarch's *Ascent to Mont Ventoux* and Emperor Maximilian's *Theuerdank*,” *The Book of Nature and Humanity in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, ed. David Hawkes and Richard G. Newhauser. Arizona Studies in the Middle Ages and Renaissance, 29 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013), 3–18.

44 All quotes are from Hugh Feiss's English translation of Pierre Michaud-Quentin's Latin transcription. The *caesurae* and formatting here has been inserted to preserve the scansion of the poem. Lines 45–48, “Godfrey of Saint-Victor: The Fountain of Philosophy—Introduction and Translation by Hugh Feiss, OSB,” *Interpretation of Scripture: Theory*, ed. Franklin T. Harkins and Franz van Liere. Victorine Texts in Translation, 3 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2012), 371–425; here 391; *Fons Philosophiae. Texte Publié Et Annoté Par Pierre Michaud-Quentin*, ed. Pierre Michaud-Quen-

Whereas spiritual knowledge leads the mind upwards to an illumination of what is possible and desirable to know, worldly knowledge mistakes the path to knowledge as knowledge itself. In Godfrey's poem, the source of pure and potable knowledge pours down from above, dividing into the streams of the Seven Liberal Arts to nourish the scholars that imbibe it.⁴⁵ It was a pure and unpolluted spring, a source of intellectual salvation just as Guerric's waters of the Jordan were a spiritual salvation. This was a fitting motif for Victorine canons, who sought to honor their vows through mystical scholasticism and humanism rather than through affective piety or bodily abnegation.

The Hydrology of Hygiene

The aqueous qualities of the *Fons Philosophiae* moves beyond a structural narrative of learning into a treatment of moral purity. For a scholar-monastic, the path to superlative principles was apprehensible through discerning the qualities and flavors of mediating knowledge. The rivers of the *fons* flowed from the same principle as Christ constituted within the river Jordan, another link between the superlative purity of the Trinity and worldly things. For an order of quasi-schoolmen, however, the mediating pattern was ordered. This is achieved through a complex hybrid of material imagery, in which the pilgrim encounters the offensive and stagnant pool of the mechanical arts, more akin to a swamp than to a river:

Cum uenissem proprius | inuenitur primo, Locis in campestribus | pede montis imo, Quem dicunt mechanicum | fons obductus limo, Ranarum palestrium | sordidatus fimo.

[When I have come closer, first I find in the fields, at the very base of the mountain, a spring drawn up from the mud that people call “mechanical,” soiled with the dung of wrestling frogs.]⁴⁶

tin (Namur: Editions Godenne, 1956), 36. The Michaud-Quentin Latin is now available from the Brepols Library of Latin Texts A (LLT-A).

45 The poem is presented in the form of a meditative spiritual ascent, in the tradition of texts such as Augustine's *Confessions*, the *Consolation of Philosophy* of Boethius, or later St. Anselm's *Proslogion* and followed in the thirteenth century by Bonaventure's *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum* and Dante's *Divine Comedy* in the fourteenth century. Robert McMahon, *Understanding the Medieval Meditative Ascent: Augustine, Anselm, Boethius, & Dante* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2006).

46 Lines 21–24, Feiss, 390; Michaud-Quentin, 36 (see note 45).

By describing the river of the mechanical arts overcrowded, polluted, and occluded, Godfrey has made an argument on many levels for another path. Those who fail to take his advice are poisoned, too indiscriminate to detect the intellectual toxins in their drink.⁴⁷ One gets the impression from this passage that Godfrey has appointed himself as spiritual “dietician,” attempting to judge the comparative nutritive merits of each river he encounters. This would make the mechanical arts a form of spiritual and intellectual “junk food,” appearing to offer satiety yet giving none: empty calories for the soul. Godfrey expresses his distaste for the mechanical arts by combining a lack of spiritual substance with the implication of moral turpitude through pollution.⁴⁸ It is important to note at this point that this seems to be a personal bias on the part of Godfrey, for the mechanical arts were commonly thought at the time – even by other Victorines – to remedy indigence of the body, one of the “three plagues of man” identified in the twelfth-century *Dialectica Monacensis*.⁴⁹ By introducing the notion of knowledge valence through a distinction between aqueous purity and pollution, the text offers not only structure, but moral instruction.

In the description of the Liberal Arts, we see the manner in which Godfrey merges the hydrological form of the poem with his desired didactic message. His exploration and delineation of riparian structures within knowledge came with a series of “taste tests,” assessing the waters to learn their curative or detrimental properties. The course of learning passed from knowledge to beatitude, as the title of a notable book on the order and its milieu puts it.⁵⁰ Victorines sought to cleanse their spiritual bodies just as Cistercians did, but their purity was framed in the mediating discourse of an intellectual. The language used to articulate this register of moral hygiene tropes valorizes the careful assaying of knowledge

⁴⁷ Lines 25–27, 33–36, Feiss, 390; Michaud-Quentin, 36 (see note 45).

⁴⁸ In this, Godfrey disagrees with Hugh, whose template he usually follows. Hugh expresses more respect and sympathy for the mechanical arts, quoting the proverb “Ingenious want hath mothered all the Arts” to argue for the necessity of the *ars mechanica*. *The Didascalicon of Hugh of St. Victor: A Medieval Guide to the Arts*, trans. Jerome Taylor (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 56.

⁴⁹ The three “plagues” of human nature were as follows: ignorance of the soul, indigence of the body and vice of body and soul combined. Against these plagues three remedies were provided: the ability to acquire the liberal arts to school the soul, the mechanical arts to make the indigent body productive and the ability to acquire virtues for the negation of vice. “*Dialectica Monacensis* (anonymous, twelfth-century) on the Division of Science,” in *Medieval Philosophy: Essential Readings with Commentary*, ed. Gyula Klima, with Fritz Allhoff and Anand Jayprakash Vaidya. Blackwell Readings in the History of Philosophy (Malden, MA, Oxford, and Carlton: Blackwell, 2007), 43.

⁵⁰ See *From Knowledge to Beatitude*, ed. E. Ann Matter and Lesley Smith (see note 21).

rather than a *bien-pensant* attitude. On the topic of “those who are students of the Arts,” the poem uses the motif of drinking to urge caution and a focus on divine things over hasty, foolish, intemperate clamoring for knowledge:

His fluentis assident | haurientes multi. Hinc adolescentuli bibunt | hinc adulti, Quis-
quis suo modulo | sapientes, stulti, Quamvis preter ordinem | ruunt inconsulti ... Cumque
credant alia | gusto suauiora, Prima cece transeunt | ut abiectiora, Nec aduertunt stolidi |
quod ulteriora, Sine fundamentis his | ruunt absque mora.

[Many drink eagerly from these waters. From them teenagers drink, from them adults drink. Each does so in his own way, whether he is wise or foolish, although the rash rush in without order. Inexperienced in things, they run without order, they do not have the clear eye of reason. Therefore, they pass by without seeing the truth, unless finally the evening light shines for them.]⁵¹

Godfrey appears to be arguing for due diligence in the experience of imbibing these waters. In addition to the structure and moral valence of the waters, there ever remains a human element to the interaction with this river. In seeking the source of the river, there is a correct time, and a correct place, to experience each taste, to view each stream, on the path to mystical revelation at the summit. And when the time is right, both in the implied course of Godfrey’s own education and the desired rectitude of the reader’s, the narrative moves on from the *Trivium* into the realm of the practical arts, the *Quadrivium* of natural philosophy. Failure to imbibe in the correct order leads to poisoning. Godfrey’s pilgrim shuns through applying spiritual knowledge the crudities of lesser arts and continues his journey toward the *fons*, avoiding pollution and contamination in search of purer waters. He admires the beauty of the landscape engendered by arts such as rhetoric, which runs “frolicking through charming meadows, [and] makes verdant with varied flowers.”⁵²

Later in the poem, the pilgrim ascends into the rarefied realm of theology, the superlative river which “carries its head higher and reaches toward God by a higher way.”⁵³ The fountain represents both the pilgrim’s journey through life and a kind of pilgrimage back through time to the original Creation. Simultaneously, the river defies gravity to return to the heavens as theology, just as salvation defies the Fall. So the narrative flows into the anagogical realm – extant as a universal without change or flaw. The river of the Heavenly Jerusalem flows from the divine through typology, appearing throughout the New and Old Testaments

51 Lines 97–100, 105–08, Feiss, 393; Michaud-Quentin, 38 (see note 45).

52 Lines 77–80, Feiss, 392; Michaud-Quentin, 38 (see note 45).

53 Lines 321–24, Feiss, 400; Michaud-Quentin, 46 (see note 45).

in the form of diverse miracles back to the creation of the universe, the moment at which the four rivers spring from the primordial paradise:

Labitur per medium | ciuitatis riuus, nullo quidem strepitu | sed effectu uiuus, omnis efficaciter | morbi sanatiuus, et ipsius etiam | mortis expulsiuus.

[A stream flows through the middle of the city, without noise but lively in effect, an effective cure for every illness; it even drives out death itself.]⁵⁴

Reminiscent of the vision of John the Divine in Revelation, the passage brings the journey to the headwaters of knowledge, to a locus that exists out of space and out of time, waiting in potential for the day of judgment. It is, in effect, the realization of water symbolism; it is a perfect river from which all others flow, demarcating the boundary between this life and the next, between perfection and imperfection, and between the finite and the infinite. It is the last frontier of the changeable world, the point at which the human passes into eternity. It is the medicine for all ills, the healing of all infirmities. It is the representation of salvation as a state of superlative spiritual well-being and wholeness. The rivers of the liberal arts allow the mind of the pilgrim to return to the source once more, their flow completing a circuit through worldly knowledge and back again.

Godfrey demonstrates the efficacy of a water metaphor when used at length to sketch the entire structure of a curriculum. By linking the structure of liberal arts learning to the proper treatment of water as a source of nutrition and cleanliness, Godfrey has linked the quest for good bodily healthy and the assessment of drinking water to the quest for knowledge and a divinely inspired search for hidden knowledge. For the *Fons Philosophiae*, knowledge brings physical health, but only when pursued with rectitude. There is a right and a wrong way to study the liberal arts; to pursue the wrong kind of knowledge in the incorrect manner will lead to ill health, focusing the mind on pointless worldly things rather than directing it upwards to the contemplation of superlative principles. Through his journey into knowledge, Godfrey's pilgrim ultimately finds the pure source of the Trinity, the drink which is “more sacred (*divinus*) than the rest, known more by experience (*usu*) and less by understanding.”⁵⁵

54 Lines 525–28, Feiss, 406; Michaud-Quentin, 53 (see note 45).

55 Lines 785–86, Feiss, 414; Michaud-Quentin, 62 (see note 45).

Cleanliness of Habit: Peter of Celle and his Letters

Peter of Celle (ca. 1115–ca. 1183) was abbot of Montier-la-Celle (by ca. 1145) and Bishop of Chartres (ca. 1181).⁵⁶ Born at Aunoy-les Minimes to a Champenois family of the lesser nobility, Peter is thought to have been a monk for some time at the Benedictine monasteries of Saint-Martin-des-Champs and Montier-la-Celle – former home of Robert of Molesmes, founder of Cîteaux – before becoming abbot of the latter.⁵⁷ Peter later became Abbot of Saint Remi de Rheims from 1162–1181 and succeeded John of Salisbury as Bishop of Chartres for the last years of his life.⁵⁸ Unable to attend the Third Lateran Council due to ill health, Peter was denied the opportunity to become a cardinal despite being described to Alexander III in a letter of nomination as “by far outstanding among the other abbots of [his] land.”⁵⁹ Peter was a regular correspondent of many of the key Church figures of his age, including Peter the Venerable, Hugh of Cluny, Thomas Becket, and the brothers John and Richard of Salisbury. He was an enthusiastic supporter and correspondent of both the Cistercian community of Clairvaux and the Carthusian priory of Mont-Dieu.⁶⁰

A blend of monk and Church magnate, Peter demonstrated a mix of priorities in his writing. Described by Ronald Pepin as “a pious man of glad temperament whose interests were never far removed from religious concerns,” Peter gravitated between scorn for worldly affairs and a manifest enjoyment of his literary friendships.⁶¹ The fame of Peter in monastic circles is attested by Nicolas of Clairvaux, who in a rapt letter exclaimed that “before I set eyes upon you, I loved you, and the basis of the love was the testimony to your piety, which I heard of from religious men.”⁶² His network of correspondents was extensive, spanning north-

⁵⁶ Introduction, in *The Letters of Peter of Celle*, trans. Julian Haseldine. Oxford Medieval Texts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001), xxix.

⁵⁷ Mary Carruthers, “On Affliction and Reading, Weeping and Argument: Chaucer’s Lachrymose Troilus in Context,” *Representations* 93 (2006): 1–21; here 3; Introduction, in *Peter of Celle: Selected Works*, trans. Hugh Feiss. Cistercian Studies Series, 100 (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1987), 1; Introduction, in Haseldine, *The Letters of Peter of Celle* (see note 57), xxx–xxxii.

⁵⁸ Bibliographical notes in *The Correspondence of Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury, 1162–1170: Letters 176–329*, trans. Anne Duggan. Oxford Medieval Texts (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 2000), 1381.

⁵⁹ Introduction, in Feiss, *Peter of Celle* (see note 58), 6.

⁶⁰ Carruthers. “On Affliction and Reading” (see note 58), 3.

⁶¹ Ronald E. Pepin, “*Amicitia Jocosa*: Peter of Celle and John of Salisbury,” *Florilegium* 5 (1983): 140–156; here 140–41.

⁶² Julian Haseldine, “Understanding the Language of *Amicitia*. The Friendship Circle of Peter of Celle (ca. 1115–1183),” *Journal of Medieval History* 20 (1994): 237–60; here 238.

ern France and southern England, and imparting a sense of spiritual friendship to many of the contemporary intellectual elite.⁶³

Peter is an interesting case study for the topic of moral hygiene, for a great deal of his writing contains moral admonitions, or statements of literary or monastic friendship based on the imagery of bodily cleanliness. For Peter, the soul was another kind of intangible corpus, superior to the perishable flesh and yet governed by the same rules. To think of spiritual health in bodily terms was not to fixate on worldly things, but to understand that the soul was not something abstract and intangible, but something with skin, clothes, an anatomy, parts – at least in an allegorical sense. For monastics, a detailed proprioception of the soul was necessary. One needed to know where the spirit resided, the effects of different metaphorical actions and behaviors, and how to keep it pure.

Moral Cleansing

Within his treatise *On Conscience*, Peter of Celle explicitly compared the outflowing waters within the cloister with those of eternal life gifted from Christ for the purification of souls, “to your eyes that they may flow with tears, and to your ears that they may hear the voice of God’s praise, and to your hands that that they be clean of the blood of cruelty and lust, to your feet that the dust of earthly desires may be shaken off.”⁶⁴ To cleanse the soul of dirt was to shed the detritus of the world – imagining the soul as corporeal was a negation of carnality. As with Guerric of Igny and his allegorical Naaman, Peter asserts that spiritual health can only be achieved through the correct form of exertion. In addition, it was necessary to preserve the link between worldly sources of water and heavenly waters the mind’s eye. The path flowing from Christ into the World also linked body and soul through a likeness of form, linking the ritualized life of the monastic within his cloister to the cleansing of a pure source:

Officinas denique claustrī nostri circumeat descendens a superioribus usque ad inferiora. Oratorium piscinis exornet tam ad abluenda sacrificii pro peccatis animalia quam ad expianda ipsa animae sanctuaria, ut iuxta altare ad pedes sacerdotis fossam habeat.

⁶³ By “friendship,” as Haseldine (239) points out, we should understand a wider network of political and social ties than can be encapsulated by the modern use of the word. Haseldine, “Understanding the Language of *Amicitia*” (see note 63), 241.

⁶⁴ “On Conscience,” in Feiss, *Peter of Celle* (see note 58), 184

[Finally, flowing down from the heights to what is lower, this stream goes around the workshops of our cloister. It decorates the chapel with pools – both for washing the animals offered up for sin and for cleansing the very sanctuary of our soul – in such a way that it has a channel next to the altar at the priest's foot.]⁶⁵

Individualized acts of monastic devotion function like a form of miraculous plumbing, the pure source of a godly community dividing and flowing to each individual act of worship like the waters of the Heavenly Jerusalem flowing from the Throne of the Lamb to the individual spaces within the sacred metropolis. Just as the water that nourished, cleansed, and powered the monastery was a source of purity and industry, so too do anagogic references to water point the mind to a higher form of nourishment, industry, and cleanliness. Peter invites the reader to take a tour through a salvific landscape, to imagine the provenance, division, function and end of its saving waters in their daily lives:

Intra et uide situm et dispositionem ciuitatis cuius platee sternuntur auro mundo, ubi uitreis canalibus, immo cristallinis, id est inspiratione inuisibili, aque uiue do trono ad singulas sanctorum conscientiarum tanquam cellas in plenitudine gratiarum profluent siue ad bibendum propter gandum propter fecunditatem.

[Enter and see the site and arrangement of the city whose broad streets are paved with fine gold, where living waters flow forth in fullness of blessings through glass, or rather crystalline, channels, that is by invisible inspiration, from the throne to each of the cells, as it were, of holy consciences, whether for drinking for the sake of pleasure, or for washing for the sake of cleanliness, or for irrigation for the sake of fertility.]⁶⁶

The “holy consciences” of the monks receive an abundant source of spiritual edification. Each monk had access to their own personal source, a way to wash the mind, nourish its intellectual crops, enrich its soils. The soul, like a field, was a space that could grow and thrive with the right source of energy, bringing forth new life and a useful spiritual harvest. Peter also admonishes the reader that ignorance of this miracle is a sin, and that a failure to thrive in the spiritually wholesome space of the cloister is a result of moral failing. To ignore the typological links between Christian salvation and the language of hygiene was to lose a crucial spiritual conduit:

⁶⁵ Petrus Cellensis, *De conscientia*, 226, lines 23–25, Brepols Library of Latin Texts A (LLT-A). “On Conscience,” in Feiss, *Peter of Celle* (see note 58), 184.

⁶⁶ Haseldine, *The Letters of Peter of Celle*, Letter 42, to Brother A and the Community of Montier-la-Celle (see note 57), 170–71.

Habete uascula munda, iuxta namque et in oculis preterfluit aqua. Sed numquid uane? Sed numquid gratis? Plane supine et crassa negligentia imputanda est singulis nisi sint omnia munda, quibus et copia aquarium redundat et temporis opportunitas superest et amor incumbit totius munditie et ordinis consuetude reragatur.

[Keep your vessels clean, for water flows past nearby and within your sight. But is it in vain? But is it without reward? Clearly the indolence and gross negligence of individuals is to be blamed if all things are nor pure when for these individuals and abundance of water flows, and suitable times exist in plenty, and love of complete cleanliness is incumbent, and the custom of the order does not stand in the way.]⁶⁷

It is incumbent upon those cleansing and imbibing within the sacred precincts of Peter's allegorical Jerusalem to maintain their purity, drink with correct motives, taking advantage of the ample opportunities offered by the monastic life. The notion of "complete cleanliness" is an apt image for the purposes of this essay, describing the holistic health regime of body and soul.

The monastic life, as Peter reminds us, provides the opportunity to cleanse both the body and the soul, and failure to do so is a great waste. Peter laments the fact that he himself has not felt the joyfulness of salvation more keenly in his life, that he has not spent more of his days attending to acts of spiritual cleansing rather than daily affairs. He laments the quotidian ablutions he has undertaken for the sake of his body at the expense of the corresponding and abstract purification of the soul:

Sic est, ego uidi, ego interfui, et utinam totiens et tam sedulo cor expurgassem quotiens et quam indesinenter manus et faciem die et nocte rigaui, non lacrimus sed aquis.

[So it is, I have seen it, I have been present, and if only I had purified my heart as often and as keenly as I have often and incessantly rinsed my hands and face day and night, not with tears but with water.]⁶⁸

Rendering the monastic life in terms of bathing and personal hygiene was only one rhetorical *color* of a well-stocked arsenal, and yet it was a potent one. The motif of washing with tears is interesting, for it highlights the fact that affective devotion and love of Christ are purifying agents, with exertions of pious emotion

67 Haseldine, *The Letters of Peter of Celle*, Letter 62, to G, a priest of Hastings (see note 57), 285–87.

68 Haseldine, *The Letters of Peter of Celle*, Letter 62, to G, a priest of Hastings (see note 57), 286–87.

serving to cleanse the soul.⁶⁹ Although abasement of the body and denial of its needs could lead to spiritual purity, the language of ritual purification and cleanliness served as a model for the far more important task of keeping the soul in good health. To go through the routines of monastic life and to care for the body without attending to the corresponding cleanliness of the soul was an empty act.

Peter's letters have been presented as didactic documents, collated, re-edited, rearranged after his death and always mediated. As Walter Ysebaert pleads for historians to recall, letter collections are never transparent or simple; they have been dictated, ordered, disseminated, curated, often rewritten, often rearranged, kept, altered and continually reused after the death of the author. They are organic entities, and should be treated with respect and scrutiny.⁷⁰ The fact that they have come to us with such a clear didactic message implies a strong rhetorical stream of thought that Peter, his readership and his successors considered vital for their moral self-care and imagination. In a monastic life where nuance of spiritual self-awareness was key, tropes of moral hygiene were potent tools. Peter's audience, like those of Guerric and Godfrey, were in need of mnemotechnical patterns for the apprehension of moral self-fashioning. The letters are greater than the sum of their parts, cultivated to provide reinforcement of key imagery. Water and its curative properties appear frequently because the *topos* that they enable appears frequently. Its frequency is determined by virtue of its great didactic importance.

Conclusion: Holistic Monastic Hygiene

In each of the three genres of text discussed above, the twelfth-century author in question has approached the task of writing with a strong didactic goal in mind. Guerric of Igny sought to lend power to his sermons; Godfrey of Saint-Victor sought to present the liberal arts in a novel arrangement; and Peter of Celle's letters come

⁶⁹ For more on the role of tears in medieval thought, see *Crying in the Middle Ages: Tears of History*, ed. Elina Gertsman (London: Routledge, 2012). See in particular the essay by Kimberley Joy-Knight, entitled “Si Puose Calcina A’ Propi Occhi: The Importance of the Gift of Tears for Thirteenth-Century Religious Women and Their Hagiographer,” 136–55.

⁷⁰ Walter Ysebaert, “Medieval Letters and Letter Collections as Historical Sources: Methodological Questions, Reflections, and Research Perspectives (Sixth–Fifteenth Centuries),” *Medieval Letters: Between Fiction and Document*, ed. Christian Høgel and Elisabetta Bartoli. Utrecht Studies in Medieval Literacy, 33 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2015), 10–62. Note that Ysebaert’s observations are equally relevant to Guerric of Igny’s sermons.

to us as a repository of sculpted, adapted and artfully arranged lessons for the readership and their religious communities. For all three, hygiene, good health, and well-being were a state not of the body alone, but of the immortal soul. For each, the genre differed in its affordances, and yet each chose to reinforce a powerful trope of self-care through the analogues of material body and immaterial spirit. None of the three relegated the flesh to the status of insignificance, although all stressed the pre-eminence of the soul. In each genre, engagement with Christ and the Trinity was the superlative cleansing: through immersion in the true Jordan for Guerric, through imbibing Theology for Godfrey, and through a vision of the waters flowing through the Heavenly Jerusalem for Peter.

Within the broader study of medieval hygiene, medicine and well-being, this essay and its monastic subject matter demonstrate a respect for the body, not as a prison, but as a companion to the spiritual. Although denial of the flesh is at the heart of the monastic mentality, Guerric, Godfrey and Peter remind us that the body is a vehicle of spiritual allegory, a way to understand the hidden needs of the soul through the maintenance of the flesh. Water was key in this process, for it bridged the two realms of existence. The divine and the mundane mingled through baptismal imagery, through the nutritive flow of knowledge from Trinity to *artes*, and through the intricate shared spaces of nourishment and cultivation glimpsed within Peter's letters.

Water exists both in the quotidian lives of monastics, and in the most superlative of eschatological imagery – the river of life springing from the Throne of the Lamb, for example. Its mediative and ecumenical properties mingle with its curative properties – and its potential to poison or disrupt – to provide potent rhetorical tropes. Recourse to hygiene on a bodily level leads to an insight into greater acts of spiritual hygiene to come.

The three monastic texts in this essay, and their three twelfth-century authors, demonstrate that similarity is not merely a convenient technique for rhetoric: it is a causative act. For the flesh to be similar to the spirit in that it must be bathed, or for the mind to be similar to the soul in that it must be cultivated, they must be similar in *nature* rather than form alone. It reminds us that neglect and care of the body are not mutually exclusive – although denial of the flesh had its place, it is equally true to observe that neglect of the body provides a poor analogy for care of the soul. This is the reverse face of the coin that is medieval human nature. We see the more familiar face frequently in the admonitions of medieval thinkers to shun worldliness and sin, the corrupters of the body. The opposite is also true: care of the body inspires care of the soul, and vice versa.

Erin S. Lynch

Affected yet Untouched: Spatial Barriers and the Neurobehavioral Impact on Lepers Living with Limited Interpersonal Touch in the Middle Ages

In the year 1160, Robert the *châtelain* of Courtalain and his wife Juliana sent their son to live at the leprosarium of Grand-Beaulieu, fifty-seven kilometers away from their home. In order to ensure that their son would be cared for throughout the duration of his life, Robert transferred ownership of a house in the country to the brothers of Grand-Beaulieu. The name and age of Robert's son are not recorded in the donation charter, likely the only surviving record of his existence.¹ By entrusting his son's care to the leprosarium, Robert and his family were able to unburden themselves of a sickly body, distance themselves from the contagion and taint of a despised and oftentimes feared disease, and ensure that their *castellum* and lands would be passed on to a healthy heir. Meanwhile, the unnamed son would live out the remainder of his days largely secluded from the wider world. These days would eventually be filled with the atrophy of muscle and bone, the deterioration of the cartilage in his face, and the possible loss of vision in one or both of his eyes.

There was a certain fear, a kind of revulsion, a sense of self-preservation, which people experienced when confronted with the leprous body in the high and late Middle Ages. As Marcia Kupfer has remarked:

Behind every leprous face was a former neighbor, a family member, oneself. Members of the majority faith, even those seemingly in good standing, were not necessarily spared. Lepers were more dreaded than Jews and heretics precisely because they proved that an

¹ "Robertus de Cortosleen et Juliana ejusdem Roberti uxor dederunt domui et fratribus Belli Loci leprosorum quamdam masuram que sita est apud Maierolias, pro filio suo infirmo, in perpetuum, et hospitem ejusdem masure quitum et solutum ab omni consuetudine per totam suam terram omnibus diebus." No. 58, *Cartulaire de la Léproserie du Grand-Beaulieu et du Prieuré de Notre-Dame de la Bourdinière*, ed. René Merlet and Maurice Jusselin (Chartres: Garnier, 1909), 26.

unseen blade cut across the usual social boundaries of birth, class, and religious affiliation. Leprosy was a branding all the more painful because it was personal.²

Certainly, not every person was overcome with revulsion or fear at the sight of the leper; the physician, the aspiring saint, other lepers would not have feared drawing near the leprous body. This, though, accounts for a fraction of a percent of the medieval populace. The personal nature of leprosy was intolerable to most. Then, as now, the one minority group which everyone was eligible to join was, of course, that of the impaired.

A diagnosis of leprosy did not mean that one was simply pulled out of the social hierarchy in order to be deposited beyond the limits of civilization. Social standing certainly played a significant role in the living conditions of the diagnosed leper.³ Status was not, however, enough to protect the leper from segregation. Lepers did not fit into their families once the disease had been discovered and/or progressed, at least not in their former capacity. And although lepers from wealthier families might have been able to remain in their homes for a time, they were still excluded from social activities. Admission into a leprosarium required some sort of accompanying donation, whether, for example, a meager fifteen sous, as in the case of Gilbert de Mignière on behalf of his granddaughter (1130),⁴ or the more extravagant donation of twelve acres of land near Saint-Georges-sur-Eure, for Hubert, the son of Thibaud Piédechat (1160).⁵

Let us begin by taking the leprosarium of Grand-Beaulieu as a case study. Grand-Beaulieu is believed to have been founded 1054. Its creation has been attributed to Thibaut III, count of Blois (1012–1089),⁶ though the foundation

² Marcia Kupfer, *The Art of Healing: Painting for the Sick and the Sinner in a Medieval Town* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003), 146.

³ Gilbertus Anglicus provides a comprehensive and careful description of how leprosy was diagnosed during the Middle Ages in his *Compendium Medicinae* (1230).

⁴ “Ego Gilebertus de Mineris ... dedi et concessi ... quindecim solidos annuatim persolvendos ... pro R., nepte mea infirma, quam in consortio suo receperunt.” No. 4, *Cartulaire de la Léproserie du Grand-Beaulieu* (see note 1), 2.

⁵ “Notum sit omnibus quod Hubertus, leprosus, filius Theobaldi Pedem Cati, receptus in consortio leprosorum Belli Loci Carnotensis, apud Sanctum Georgium super Auduram duodecim agripennos terre donavit dictis leprosis.” No. 13, *Cartulaire de la Léproserie du Grand-Beaulieu* (see note 1), 6.

⁶ Lejeune, M. *Notice Historique sur la Fondation de la Maladrerie ou Léproserie du Grand-Beaulieu, au Diocèse de Chartres, en 1054, par Thibault III, Comte de Chartres*. Extrait du tome XIII des Annales de la Société Royale des Science, Belles-Lettres et Arts d’Orléans (Orléans: Dani-court-Huet, 1833). With thanks to the J. Otto Lottes Health Sciences Library, University of Missouri.

charter has not survived. Between 1100 and 1300, Grand-Beaulieu was the largest leprosarium in the diocese of Sens, with a total of 88 residents,⁷ 55 of whom were healthy, and 33 of whom were lepers.⁸ By the fifteenth century, Grand-Beaulieu was one of thirty leprosaria within the limits of its diocese.⁹ The leprosarium remained active until its suppression in December of 1659 by Louis XIV (1638–1715), who ordered that a seminary be established in its place, as a favor to his uncle, Gaston (1608–1660), the duke of Orléans.¹⁰ The 33 lepers who were relocated to Grand-Beaulieu in the High Middle Ages allow us access to the lived experience of medieval lepers as so many sources which consider how they lived have survived. Although I approach the Grand-Beaulieu lepers as a case study of sorts, the objective of this study is to develop a means by which we might understand individual or groups of lepers living with this manner of limited interpersonal touch in any number of periods and/or places.

In order to investigate leprosy as it functioned as a disability in the Middle Ages, we must cast a wide net and explore interdisciplinary approaches to the material. We have little in the way of primary sources that deal directly with those persons sent to live within medieval leprosaria. We can, however, attempt to stitch together their lives by looking at donation records and charters, constitutions and statutes of leprosaria, as well as juridical edicts, and both medieval and modern medical studies which pertain to leprosy and, for the purposes of this paper, touch or lack thereof. Through the analysis of these diverse types of sources, this paper will consider how and why segregation functioned in the life of the medieval leper.

This paper will argue that in the absence of touch the human brain forms and evaluates relationships, and processes and expresses emotions in a manner

⁷ 1100–1150: *sanus*, 4 male/ 9 female; *leper*, 6 male/ 3 female. 1151–1200: *sanus*, 20 male/ 1 female; *leper*, 14 male/ 1 female. 1201–1250: *sanus*, 3 male/ 7 female; *leper*, 7 male/ 1 female. 1251–1300: *sanus*, 6 male/ 5 female; *leper*, 1 male/ -- female. François-Olivier Touati, “Tableau 8: La répartition des noms connus de lépreux et de personnels valides attachés aux léproseries de la province de Sens (1100–1351),” *eadem, Maladie et société au Moyen Age: La lèpre, les lépreux et les léproseries dans la province ecclésiastiques de Sens jusqu’au milieu du XIV^e siècle*. Bibliothèque du Moyen Age, 11. AVISTA Studies in the History of Medieval Technology, Science, and Art (Paris: DeBoeck Université, 1998), 360.

⁸ François-Olivier Touati has saved us the trouble of processing the data provided by the *Cartulaire du Grand-Beaulieu* and the *Rouge Cartulaire*. “Tableau 8: La répartition des noms connus de lépreux et de personnels valides attachés aux léproseries de la province de Sens (1100–1351),” *Maladie et société au Moyen Age* (see note 7), 360.

⁹ Claudine Billot, *Chartres à la fin du Moyen Age* (Paris: l’École des Hautes Études en Science Sociales, 1987), 79.

¹⁰ No. 397, *Cartulaire de la Léproserie du Grand-Beaulieu* (see note 1), 183.

which deviates from the norm; the spatial barrier enclosing the medieval leper may explain why s/he is often described in medieval sources as being behaviorally divergent. This will be accomplished in two parts. First, I argue that due to a fear of contagion, many lepers in the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries were expelled from their communities and, second, for those who, for example, wound up in a leprosarium such as that at Grand-Beaulieu, a rigid and layered spatial barrier was placed around the leper. We ought to visualize this spatial barrier as an invisible field which traveled around the diseased body, separating him/ her from the physical touch of the rest of the world. It should be noted that proximity is not the same thing as contact. Isolation in the case of the leper does not necessarily mean far from the crowd, rather, even in the midst of a crowd, the leper was physically isolated with his/ her body. I will analyze the layers of this spatial barrier by considering the following: the social condition of the medieval leper, experienced largely in terms of marginalization; the contemporary medical understanding of hygiene and contagion which supported the social marginalization of lepers; the juridical institutionalization of marginalization; the means by which the leper was expelled from his/her society; and the lived experience within the leprosarium of Grand-Beaulieu. Second, I will conclude by speculating and considering the medieval trope of the rage-filled leper in the context of modern research concerning the neurobehavioral impact of interpersonal touch, or lack thereof.

The Spatial Barrier

Social Marginalization of the Leper

While the lived experience of the individual leper should be regarded as unique, it is possible to examine the concept of leper in the medieval mind more generally. The social marginalization of medieval lepers ought to be understood as the context in which our spatial barrier was created. A complex and varied understanding of the leper led to many incongruous explanations for why the leper was expelled from society. For centuries, leprosy was affiliated with the curses of disobedience, in which a pestilence would be sent down upon the sinner.¹¹ But

¹¹ Leviticus 26:14–41; Deuteronomy 28:15–68.

it was also connected to ideas about the impure soul, corrupted from within.¹² The leper was seen as the picture of suffering in this world, an example of one who would undoubtedly be admitted into heaven.¹³ But s/he was also seen as a

12 The third sermon from Bernard of Clairvaux's *On the Resurrection of the Lord*, "On Naaman's Leprosy," considers the story of Elisha and Naaman as allegory. Bernard systematically covers the seven ways in which he sees pride marring the soul, just as leprosy corrupts the flesh. These are in ownership, in showy clothing, in bodily pleasure, twice through the mouth (in complaining and in boasting), and twice through the heart (in self-will and self-council). He carries the metaphor through each of his examples, explaining how each manifestation of pride spoils that which ought to remain pure and offers redemption to the blemished soul through the nature of Christ, just as Naaman was cleansed and purified through washing in the river Jordan. Once the soul's leprosy has been washed away, room enough is made for the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit to enter in its place. As leprosy is to the flesh as pride is to the soul, so Christ is to the soul as the doctor is to the body. The "noxious humors" of leprosy poison the flesh, as sin poisons and corrupts the soul. For Bernard, leprosy is that which marginalizes the body, as sin separates man from God. Interestingly, Bernard's analogy seems to suggest that he views leprosy as a consequence of the individual's actions, as the corrupted soul is surely the result of willfully chosen sin. "On the Resurrection of the Lord, Sermon Three: Concerning Naaman's Leprosy," in Bernard of Clairvaux, *Sermons for Lent and the Easter Season*, trans. Irene Edmonds, ed. Mark A. Scott, OCSO (Collegeville, MN: Cistercian Publication, Liturgical Press, 2013), 168–74. Even before Bernard of Clairvaux wrote about the leprosy of the soul, Guerric of Igny considered the same allegory; James Smith, in his contribution to this volume, analyzes Guerric's sermon with regard to spiritual hygiene. Catherine of Siena, a Tertiary of the Dominican Order, a scholastic philosopher, and the eventual patroness of bodily ills, sickness, and illness, echoing Bernard, provides us with ample material for such a study, as she uses *leper/ leprous/ leprosy* as a metaphor in several of her letters. She uses the metaphor of leprosy to describe both the corrupted and marred soul (vol. III, pp 139–40) and the sin which corrupts the soul (vol. I, p. 252, vol. III, p. 163). For Catherine, leprosy was something foul and disgusting, something that spoils, deforms, and ruins that which would otherwise be good and whole. In each of these examples, the metaphor illustrates that which is flawed from within. She does not necessarily equate leprosy with sin, or leprosy with evil, but Catherine does see a connection between a disease which mangles the body and sin which mangles the soul. Suzanne Noffke, ed. *Letters of Catherine of Siena*. Vol. III (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2000), 139–40. Letter T80 / G123: To Maestro Giovanni Tantucci, Augustinian hermit of Lecceto, late May 1378. Suzanne Noffke, ed. *Letters of Catherine of Siena*. Vol. I (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2000), 252. Letter T181 / G40 / DT55: To Nicola da Osimo, in Avignon (secretary to Gregory XI), January 1376. Noffke, *Letters of Catherine of Siena*. Volume III, 163. Letter T299/G231: To Ristoro di Piero Canigiani of Florence, lawyer and prominent Guelf, early July 1378.

13 In his treatise on surgery, Guy de Chauliac suggests that the suffering of the leper should be explained to the patient as a purgatorial suffering on earth which he must experience for the salvation of his soul. "In primis invocando Dei auxilium, debet eos consolari quod ista passio est salvation animae: et quod non dubitent dicere veritatem: quia si reperirentur leprosy, purgatorium animae esset: et si mundus habet eos odio, non tamen Deus: imo Lazarum plus dilexit quam alios." Guy de Chauliac, *Chirurgia Magna Guidonis de Gauliaco: Olim celeberrimi Medici*,

lascivious and predatory monster.¹⁴ The medical and hygienic components of the leper's seclusion operated within these varied social perceptions of leper as both the suffering wretch in need of a saintly kiss and the dangerous "other."

Medical Rationale for the Spatial Barrier

One of the defining characteristics of medieval leprosy was the marginalization which came as a result of the diagnosis. This was due to a medieval understanding of hygiene and contagion. The publications of François-Olivier Touati and Luke Demaitre, two of the leading figures in leprosy research today, represent the current standard works in the field. Their studies provide, for the most part, clear explanations of how leprosy functioned in society. However, in regard to fear of contagion, they are, perhaps, overly reliant on academic medieval medical treatises. Touati has argued that fear of contagion was minor.¹⁵ He disregards the

nunc demum suae primae integritati restituta a Lavrentio Iovberto medico Regio, primario doctore, nec non Cancellario & Iudice in Gymnasio Montis pessulani. Quae autem Iovbertus in hoc opere recognoscendo, & illustrando praestiterit, post epistolam ad Lectores videre licet (Lugduni/Lyon: Stephanum Michaelem, 1585), 253.

14 In the late twelfth-century Old French *Romance of Tristran* by Beroul and Beroul II, having learned of Iseult's unfaithfulness, the king seeks to punish her in the cruelest of ways imaginable. Rather than execution, he banishes her to live among the lepers, thought to be not only diseased and vile, but savage rapists. Playing on the medieval trope, the author draws a clear picture of the leper as deviant, as criminal, as one who ought to be feared. Barbara N. Sargent-Baur, ed. *The Romance of Tristran by Beroul and Beroul II: A Diplomatic Edition and Critical Edition* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015) 31–34, lines 1141–1270. This may be further realized if we consult another of Catherine of Siena's quotations, "Oh what a sweet fragrance it would be and how acceptable to God if you, my dearest son and daughter, were to offer yourselves to God with this fragrance so sweet and lovely and, leaving leprosy to the lepers, would this very day pursue the angelic state." The phrase "leave leprosy for the lepers" could be echoing this sentiment of leper as the evil, lustful criminal, as the context of her remark was urging a married couple to remain abstinent even after taking their vows. She too equates leprosy with deviance. Noffke, *Letters of Catherine of Siena, Volume III* (see note 13), 211. Letter T279/G30: To Ristoro Canigiani, a Florentine lawyer, late September to October 1378. Catherine is here instructing Ristoro and his wife to practice abstinence, even after marriage.

15 Touati, *Maladie et société au Moyen Age* (see note 7), 276. For information about the historiography surrounding this subject, Bruno Tabuteau has written an outstanding article concerning the last thirty years of medieval leprosy scholarship entitled "Historical Research Developments on Leprosy in France and Western Europe," *The Medieval Hospital and Medical Practice*, ed. Barbara S. Bowers. *Avista Studies in the History of Medieval Technology, Science and Art* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007), 41–56.

theory of leper as contagious and therefore necessarily segregated.¹⁶ Furthermore, Luke Demaitre has written that “touching a leprous person was hardly dramatized in medical sources as the ultimate horror.”¹⁷ While not incorrect, Demaitre’s focus lies with physicians and not with the lay persons encountering the diseased body unexpectedly. It was here, not with the physicians, that both disgust and fear of contagion were immense and certain.

Both Touati and Demaitre draw their conclusions on the perception of contagion based on what a handful of medieval medical texts say about the subject. As a result, their findings are problematic in two ways. First, there are, in fact, medieval medical sources which wholly negate these views and state, unequivocally, that leprosy was believed to be contagious by means of touch and that separation between the healthy and sick was absolutely necessary.¹⁸ Second, their findings do little in the way of aiding our understanding of the lived experience of the leper, as the majority of the impositions placed on the leper were made not by physicians but by secular and ecclesiastical authorities who did not always follow the recommendations of said physicians. The leprous body moved through and was rejected by a world largely populated by non-physicians, persons who had their own ideas about the disease, its causes, and consequences. As a result, we must certainly consider the medical texts written by physicians, but, perhaps more importantly, we must take into account the medical ideas held by the Church, kings, local magistrates, religious and lay brethren of leprosaria, law-makers, and the *vulgaris*.

The process of expelling the leper from his/her community, as discussed below, was meant to be a hygienic act for the protection of the healthy members of said community. When we look at the history of perception of leprosy in a social and cultural context, this hygienic motivation is revealed. In the Vulgate, the entire thirteenth book of Leviticus is dedicated to the diagnosing and expulsion of lepers from the community. In the third verse, it is written, “If he [the priest] sees the leprosy in his skin... upon his judgment he shall be separated.”¹⁹ Concerning the tradition of expulsion, Flavius Josephus wrote,

¹⁶ Touati, *Maladie et société au Moyen Age* (see note 7), 52.

¹⁷ Luke Demaitre, *Leprosy in Premodern Medicine: A Malady of the Whole Body* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007), 135.

¹⁸ Texts written by Jan Yperman and Guy de Chauliac are two of these, which will be discussed below.

¹⁹ Leviticus 13:3. Interestingly, it is only the Vulgate which requires that the leper “*separabitur*.” The Hebrew version uses the phrase “*טמא נטה*” that is, “pronounce him unclean,” as below.

For he [Moses] forbade those that had the leprosy either to continue in a city, or to inhabit in a village, but commanded that they should go about by themselves with their clothes rent; and declares that such as either touch them, or live under the same roof with them, should be esteemed unclean.²⁰

By the medieval period, although the leper was no longer obliged to rend his clothing, the idea of remaining separate from and untouched by the healthy community persisted.

In the high Middle Ages, evidence for the persistence of this idea can be found in at least two medical texts, one written by Jan Yperman (1260–1331), the other by Guy de Chauliac (1300–1368). Yperman, a Flemish surgeon, wrote, “The hands of the leprous person would make healthy men lepers and because of this fear they are sent from among the people, this is ordained in the Old and in the New Testament.”²¹ Yperman specifies that it is the hands of the leper, the contact arrived at by means of touch which causes transmission. Guy de Chauliac, personal physician to Pope Clement VI, wrote unequivocally that because leprosy was contagious, lepers had to be secluded away from the healthy populace.²² It has been suggested that Guy’s position was influenced by contemporary ideas about the plague (1347–1351). Drawing on a position of Touati’s, Demaitre writes that the Black Death created “a new interpretive framework” through which diseases and transmission were understood.²³ While this is undoubtedly true, connecting this new framework to Guy de Chauliac is certainly a mistake, as he was merely echoing the position of Yperman, who wrote his medical treatise prior to the Black Death. This distinction only matters when rebutting the argument that it was the fear of contagion that came as a result of the fourteenth century plague

20 Flavius Josephus, *Against Apion*, translated by William Whiston (Project Gutenberg) Book I, Chapter 31. EBook No.2849. Last accessed on Feb. 4, 2016. http://www.gutenberg.org/files/2849/2849-h/2849-h.htm#link2H_4_0001. The Hebrew word נַגּוּן here, from נַגּוּן meaning unclean in this context, carries with it the connotation of that which has been contaminated and is pure no longer.

21 “Die handen van den laserschen mensche soude den ghesonden menschen lasers maken ende omme die vreese versetmense van onder de lieden dats gheordineert in dat oude stestament ende in dat nieuwe.” Jan Yperman, *De Cyrurgie* (Leiden: A. W. Sijthoff’s Uitg. Mij., 1912), 177.

22 “Circa tamen examen, & iudicium leprosorum est multum advertendum: quia maxima iniuria est sequestrare non sequestrandos, & dimitere leprosos cum populo. Nam morbus est contagiosus, & infectiuus.” Guy de Chauliac, *Chirurgia Magna*, 253. Demaitre erroneously writes that Guy remained silent on the need for sequestration, yet here we see that it was quite the contrary; Luke Demaitre, *Leprosy in Premodern Medicine* (see note 17), 140.

23 Demaitre, *Leprosy in Premodern Medicine* (see note 17), 140.

that were supporting, or indeed causing, Guy's statement. In fact, the sentiment predates the Black Death, as is seen in Yperman's works.

Juridical Institutionalization of the Barrier

Supported by contemporary medical views, the social marginalization of lepers was institutionalized by both secular and ecclesiastical juridical mandates. While the former stripped the leper of rights in order to protect the *sanus*, that is, the healthy person or non-leper, ecclesiastical law appears, at least on the surface, to provide the leper with a modicum of protection. Even the ecclesiastical edicts, though, serve to further institutionalize the leper's marginalization.

Living with leprosy among persons not infected by the disease could often be considered a penal offence for lay persons during the twelfth through the fourteenth centuries in Western Europe.²⁴ The writ *De Leproso Amovendo* functioned as a secular authorization for the expulsion of lepers who, for example, attempted to remain in their homes once their families and/or communities wanted them gone. The Third Lateran Council (1179) produced the first piece of ecclesiastical legislation to deal with the subject of lepers. In this edict, Pope Alexander III (1159–1181) granted the lepers of Christendom a morsel of autonomy.²⁵ According to Canon 23, because they were not welcome or included by society at large, lepers were permitted to establish their own churches with cemeteries and priests of their own. Additionally, they would no longer be compelled to pay tithes for the use of their gardens or the pasture of their animals. While Lateran III prevented the community and church from exacting tithes and tolls, it also ensured that

²⁴ Rotha Mary Clay, *Mediaeval Hospital in England* (New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1966), 58. Clerics and monks afflicted with leprosy lived under an entirely different law code as they were subject only to the ecclesiastical leper laws. As such, many often remained within their monasteries, though housed in a small cottage or hut apart from the other members of the order, or they became the priests and religious leaders of leper colonies and hospitals nearest their monasteries or churches.

²⁵ "... Ecclesiastici quidam ... leprosis qui cum sanis habitare non possunt et ad ecclesiam cum aliis convenire, ecclesias et coemeteria non permittunt habere nec proprii iuvari ministerio sacerdotis. Quod quia procul a pietate christiana esse dignoscitur, de benignitate apostolica constituimus, ut ubicumque tot simul sub communi vita fuerint congregati, qui ecclesiam sibi cum coemeterio constituere et proprio gaudere valeant presbytero, sine contradictione aliqua permittantur habere..." Statuimus etiam ut de hortis et nutrimentis animalium suorum, decimas tribuere non cogantur." *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils, Volume One: Nicea I to Lateran V*, ed. Norman Tanner S. J., (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1990), 222–23.

the lepers would need to establish their own centers of worship and burial sites away from the healthy community. A barrier was thus established, and the leper was barred from the mainstream commercial, communal, and religious fabric of society at large.

Expulsion and Isolation within Grand-Beaulieu

The Sarum Manual has often been inappropriately referenced with regard to the expulsion of lepers. Although the tradition of separating lepers from the healthy public was not created with the Sarum expulsion rite, the language used to discuss the expulsion of lepers is often pulled directly from this sixteenth-century source. We should not be relying on its content when we discuss how lepers moved through society and actually experienced their disease during the Middle Ages. The Sarum rite has been clung to by scholars of the High Middle Ages for so long because it fits so neatly with what would later come to be true with regard to the vilification of lepers. It is most often cited by scholars who are not experts on medieval leprosy but whose work intersects at some small point with the medieval manifestation of the disease. The anachronistic use of the Sarum rite has been recycled by so many scholars for so many years that many seem to have forgotten that the oft-repeated “civil death”²⁶ ceremony comes to us directly from the Sarum manual.

However, certain aspects of what appear in the Sarum expulsion rite can in fact be applied to earlier periods because these were older practices that survived long enough to be included in the Sarum rite. With Grand-Beaulieu as our case study, a comparative analysis of their surviving thirteenth century statutes and the Sarum expulsion rite reveal which aspects of the rite can and should be allowed while the rest is forever left in the sixteenth century. The point here is not to suggest that that we use the Sarum rite while analyzing lepers in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, but to clarify that what sounds as though it is coming from the Sarum is in fact from an older source, in this case, the statutes of the leprosarium of Grand-Beaulieu.

As soon as a leper was received into Grand-Beaulieu, a set of rules of conduct, as defined in the leprosarium’s statutes, was imposed on him/ her. The *Statuts de la Léproserie de Grand-Beaulieu de Chartres* (1264), outline the rules and regula-

²⁶ Bronislaw Geremek, “The Marginal Man,” *The Medieval World*, ed. Jacques Le Goff, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (London: Parkgate Books, Ltd., 1990), 367.

tions for the lepers, detail how the house was to be run, and by whom.²⁷ These statutes defined in no small detail the limits and rigidity of the spatial barrier between the lepers and the healthy persons running the house. The statutes, echoed in the later Sarum expulsion rite, supply us with a fairly comprehensive picture of the daily effects of the spatial barrier. The expulsion rite included in the Sarum Manual explains that avoiding contact or the possibility of contact between leper and non-leper was necessary so as to prevent harm coming to the healthy person, including the phrase, “ut non de te male habeat,” in order that he, the *sanus*, might not be harmed by the leper.²⁸ Although this phrasing was not used in the statutes of the Grand-Beaulieu, the sentiment is, in fact present.

The barrier was further strengthened by the requisite, distinctive dress of the leper. Touati has suggested that it was not until the sixteenth century that the lepers of Grand-Beaulieu were forced to wear distinguishing badges in order that they be more easily recognizable.²⁹ According to the Sarum expulsion ritual, which required the leper to make him/herself visible by means of dress, as well as by carrying and using the infamous clapper, the bound-together boards which functioned as a noise-maker to warn of a leper’s approach, Touati’s statement is accurate.³⁰ The practice of requiring a leper to wear some sort of distinctive garb in order that he might be seen from a distance by the healthy is in fact a thirteenth-century practice.³¹ For the Grand-Beaulieu lepers, this meant wearing *vestimenta clausa, sine colore*, plain cloth which covered the whole body, while the religious brothers and sisters and any of the healthy laity at the leprosarium wore *vestes de ronsseto*, that is, clothing made of a coarse red cloth. With the addition of the clapper, lepers would have been recognizable from a distance, enabling the leper and the healthy stranger to keep their distance from one another.

27 Le Grand, ed., *Statuts d'Hôtel-Dieu et de Léproseries, Recueil de Textes du XII^e au XIV^e siècle* (Paris: Alphonse Picard et Fils, Editeurs, 1901), 214–23.

28 “Appendix A: Manuale ad Usum Insignis Ecclesiae Sarum,” *Manuale et Processionale ad Usum Insignis Ecclesiae Eboracensis* (Durham: Andrews & Co, 1875), 107*.

29 “C'est seulement en 1529 “que s'y ajoute le port d'un insigne distinctif prescrit par l'évêque de Chartres: encore cette grande lettre L, portée sur le cote gauche de vêtement n'affuble-t-elle les personnels valides, seuls en principe au contact du reste de la société.” Touati, *Maladie et société au Moyen Age* (see note 7), 760.

30 “Defendo tibi, ne de cetero vadas sine habitu leprosali, ut cognoscaris ad alii: et noli decalciatus esse extra domum tuam.” “Manual ad usum Sarum” (see note 28), 106*. “Debet habere ... signum suum clamitelas ...”

31 No. 359, *Cartulaire de la Léproserie du Grand-Beaulieu* (see note 1), 154. Le Grand, *Statuts d'Hotels-Dieu* (see note 27), 215.

The spatial barrier erected between the leper and the *sanus* was described at length in the statutes and echoed in the expulsion rite much later. Lepers were prohibited from eating or drinking with both the healthy lay and religious brethren living at the leprosarium of Grand-Beaulieu.³² According to the Sarum ritual, sixteenth-century lepers continued to be prohibited from eating or drinking in the presence of healthy persons.³³ Lepers were forbidden from touching communal foods at Grand-Beaulieu.³⁴ The Sarum rite states that lepers were similarly forbidden from entering taverns in order to purchase wine.³⁵ Wine was provided for the leper within Grand-Beaulieu. In fact, the statutes outline, in great detail, how much wine a person was supposed to receive whether it was a regular day, a feast day, or the anniversary of a sizable donation, and distinguishes quantities, taking into account the leper's health condition, gender, and age.³⁶ Within the leprosarium, they were prohibited from entering the workshops of the healthy.³⁷ The Sarum goes into greater detail on this account, stating that in villages, lepers were forbidden from entering places in which large groups of people would gather, including the church, mill, and bakery.³⁸

The statutes of Grand-Beaulieu also define a spatial barrier between the *sanus* and those items with which a leper might come into contact. Demaitre has also written that “physicians [and] health commissioners did not commonly link clothing to the spread of leprosy.”³⁹ However, at Grand-Beaulieu it was mandated that the clothing of the lepers be washed separately from the clothing of the

³² “Nullus de domo sanus, vel extraneus sanus, cum leprosis comedat vel bibat, nec in dominus eorum nec per nocte nec possit syper hoc dictus prior dispensare. Si quis vero contra fecerit, vino careat uno die; leprosus vero qui eum invitaverit sive receperit pena consimili puniatur.” No. 359, *Cartulaire de la Léproserie du Grand-Beaulieu* (see note 1), 154. Le Grand, *Statuts d'Hôtel-Dieu* (see note 27), 217.

³³ “Praecipio tibi, ne de cetero comedas neque bibas in societatibus nisi cum leprosis.” “Manual ad usum Sarum” (see note 28), 107*.

³⁴ “Leprosi non intrent officinas sanorum et cibaria communia tangere non presumant.” No. 359, *Cartulaire de la Léproserie du Grand-Beaulieu*, 154. Le Grand, *Statuts d'Hotels-Dieu* (see note 27), 217.

³⁵ “Defendo tibi, ne de cetero inters tabernas vel alias domos, si velis vinum emere, vel quod datur fac illud ponerin tuo busillo.” “Manual ad usum Sarum” (see note 28), 106*.

³⁶ No. 359, *Cartulaire de la Léproserie du Grand-Beaulieu* (see note 1), 155. Le Grand, *Statuts d'Hotels-Dieu* (see note 27), 219–21.

³⁷ “Leprosi non intrent officinas sanorum et cibaria communia tangere non presumant.” No. 359, *Cartulaire de la Léproserie du Grand-Beaulieu*, 154. Le Grand, *Statuts d'Hotels-Dieu* (see note 27), 217.

³⁸ “Defendo tibi nunquam intrare in Ecclesiis, in foro, in molendino, in furno, et in societatibus populorum.” “Manual ad usum Sarum” (see note 28), 106*.

³⁹ Demaitre, *Leprosy in Premodern Medicine* (see note 17), 135.

*sanus.*⁴⁰ In the Sarum manual, the idea of water being a conduit for transmission persists; the leper was forbidden from washing his/her hands and belongings in shared water sources.⁴¹

Violating the Spatial Barrier

The one notable medieval figure whom this barrier did not restrain was the saint. The fact that the saintly body reached through the spatial barrier in order to lay hands or lips upon the leprous body is not evidence for the weakness or absence of the barrier. On the contrary, the saintly caress which pierced the invisible confines of the leprous body, defying conventional practices in order to demonstrate piety and holiness, functions as further evidence for the spatial barrier argument. Only the holy were convinced of their protection from contagion when reaching through the barrier. That they did not contract the disease was not evidence against the theory of tactile transmission, rather it supported their claims of divine immunity.

Isolated Within the Leprous Body

From the expulsion rite and the statutes, we know what sorts of impositions were placed upon lepers with regard to their behavior. If we consider the bodily experience of living as a leper within this spatial barrier, another aspect of the leprous life is revealed. This lived experience can be accessed through the experience of the disease itself and through the neurological reality of living without interpersonal touch.

If we were to conceive of the spatial barrier as a series of concentric rings or layers, the innermost layer of the barrier would have been the leper's own body. The body of the leper functioned as a barrier in three ways in particular, in the skin, the eyes, and the mind, or behavior,⁴² of the leper. The surface of his/her

40 “Panni vero sanorum cum pannis leprosorum nullatenus abluantur.” No. 359, *Cartulaire de la Léproserie du Grand-Beaulieu* (see note 1), 154–55. Le Grand, *Statuts d'Hôtel-Dieu* (see note 27), 217.

41 “Defendo tibi nunquam lavare manus tuas, nec etiam alia tui necessaria in fontibus neque in rivulis quarumcumque aquarum. Et si vis bibere, haurias aquam cum tuo busillo vel aliquot vase.” “Manual ad usum Sarum” (see note 28), 106*.

42 This third point, the behavior of the leper, will be fully explored in Section II, below.

body acted as a part of the barrier in that it made touch impossible to be experienced. In his *Compendium Medicinae*, Gilbertus Anglicus (1180–1250) discussed the symptoms of leprosy in order to diagnose patients. He described leprosy as characterized by “tumors accompany the loss of hair from the eyebrows,”⁴³ creating the bumpy-looking skin so often associated with the disease. He went on to write that the leper “is tormented by a persistent itching; he suffer[s] inordinately now from heat and now from cold.”⁴⁴ Gilbertus writes that the leper experienced a “loss of sensation” in the extremities, paralysis of the nerves, “consumption of the muscles,” and a “distortion of the joints of the foot and hands, and of the mouth and nose.”⁴⁵ Constance Classen has succinctly noted,

[Leprosy] could produce painful sores, it could also result in the loss of the sense of pain, together with a general deterioration of touch. ... Leprosy could also produce thick, lumpy skin, erosion of the nose, muscle weakness, and lead to the loss of fingers and toes. As a final blow, another consequence of leprosy was blindness, which left lepers reliant precisely on that sense of touch that their disease had delineated.⁴⁶

Within the social components of the spatial barrier which surrounded him, the leper experienced the final layer of isolation by not being able to feel sensations in his deformed extremities. His skin thus acted as the ultimate barrier separating him/her from the world; for even if someone would have reached out and placed a hand on his/her, at a certain point in the progression of hi/hers illness, s/he would no longer have been able to feel their touch.

Gilbertus writes that the leper’s “eyes become distorted, rimmed with red, striking horror into those who see them.”⁴⁷ The physician was not exaggerating for effect here. The horror and disgust he describes speaks to the social marginalization of the leper, certainly. But it is actually far more complex than that. The red eyes of the leper were the result of a weakening of the nerves and muscles in the eyes and eyelids which prevented the leper from blinking; this is what caused the leper’s eventual blindness. The leper’s blindness both isolated him/ her from the world by cutting off his/ her visual access to the world, and the physical changes which occurred to the eye distanced the observer from the leper. The change in the color of the sclera, or the whites of the eyes, as a result of the inability to blink,

⁴³ Gilbertus Anglicus, “The Symptoms of Leprosy, from *Comendium Medicinae*,” *Medieval Medicine: A Reader*, ed. Faith Wallis (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 341.

⁴⁴ Gilbertus Anglicus, “The Symptoms of Leprosy,” *Medieval Medicine* (see note 43), 341.

⁴⁵ Gilbertus Anglicus, “The Symptoms of Leprosy,” *Medieval Medicine* (see note 43), 340.

⁴⁶ Constance Classen, *Deepest Sense: A Cultural History of Touch* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2012), 56.

⁴⁷ Gilbertus Anglicus, “The Symptoms of Leprosy,” *Medieval Medicine* (see note 43), 341.

would undoubtedly have contributed to frightening one who encountered a leper unexpectedly.

In addition to finding bright red, bloodshot eyes perhaps scary in their own right, human beings rely on observing eye movement to determine the trustworthiness of other human beings. According to Louis Cozolino, humans rely on eye movement, along with “blushing and pupil dilation ... let others know of our interest, distress, or embarrassment and provide important and often unconscious clues to our willingness to engage in a relationship ... [They] greatly enhance our ability to communicate with one another.”⁴⁸ Darkened sclera, such as that which the leper would have as s/he lost the ability to blink, make it more difficult to distinguish between sclera and iris, which is how we are able to tell if an eye (read: gaze) shifts or darts to the side.

Modern research on this subject concludes that human beings “have the greatest horizontal exposure of the sclera relative to the size of the iris, another variable maximizing the ‘readability of human eyes’ Whereas in other primates, the sclera is dark to hide gaze direction, in humans, camouflage gave way to revealing the direction of our attention and possible intentions.”⁴⁹ Because the eyes of the leper were discolored, deformed, and eventually unusable, it can be argued that this contributed to the mistrust and fear between the leper and *sanus*. If the visible sclera around the iris, an evolutionary advantage enjoyed by humans, functions as a means by which one is able to monitor eye movement, gauge intention, and measure trustworthiness, the leper could have been viewed as dangerous. Additionally, due to the leper’s eventual corruption and/or complete loss of vision, s/he would not have been able to pick up on these same social communications occurring in the bodies around him/ her. Thus, structural changes to the leper’s eye acted as an additional social barrier.⁵⁰

In addition to the loss of sensation and the reddening of the eyes, Gilbertus Anglicus also claimed that lepers “become enraged more easily than usual.”⁵¹ The violent and wrathful nature of the leper is a trope which we see in medieval literature and in medical texts alike, but does it have any foundation in the effects of the disease? Could there be some moment of observed reality behind the violence and rage of Ivain, leader of the lepers, when King Mark throws Iseult to the

⁴⁸ Louis Cozolino, *Neuroscience of Human Relationships: Attachment and the Developing Social Brain* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2006) 23–24.

⁴⁹ Cozolino, *Neuroscience of Human Relationships* (see note 48), 23.

⁵⁰ Cozolino, *Neuroscience of Human Relationships* (see note 48), 22–24.

⁵¹ Gilbertus Anglicus, “The Symptoms of Leprosy,” *Medieval Medicine* (see note 43), 341.

lepers to be violated?⁵² In order to answer this, it is necessary to wade even deeper into the waters of modern scientific research.

The Neurobehavioral Impact of the Spatial Barrier

In the final section of this paper, I rely on the conclusions of experts in the science of interpersonal touch, applying these to the medieval leper, as situated within the cultural context of the lepers of Grand-Beaulieu, outlined above. The goal is not to diagnose medieval lepers with additional disorders; rather, to consider the theoretical effects of the spatial barrier in the lived experience of the medieval leper. One such effect was the likely neurological impact of living with limited interpersonal touch as a direct result of said spatial barrier. In the following pages, I will suggest that limited interpersonal touch led to actual changes to the brain of the medieval leper, and that this limited interpersonal touch led to the possibility of divergent behavior, such as the kind we often see in medieval medical and literary descriptions of lepers in the abstract.

The medical condition of leprosy disabled tactile perception, or the passive sense of touch, that is, experiencing being touched, while the social condition of leprosy disabled haptic perception, the active sense of touch, or, the exploration of three-dimensional objects and surfaces through the act of touching, the latter as a result of the spatial barrier. We have already briefly explored the disabling of the leper's tactile perception by considering the loss of sensation in the body's extremities. The eventual loss of tactile perception would have been the final step in the leper becoming completely cut off from the world. As a result, the leper's somatosensory⁵³ processing would have come to a complete halt when s/he could no longer experience touch, impairing the process of sensory stimuli and the information which would have otherwise been obtained and processed. The rest of this paper will consider the theoretical lived experience of the leper as a result of both this and impaired haptic perception.

Haptic perception is often divided into three levels of experience. We ought to visualize these three as the differences between a tap on the shoulder, a hand shake, and a massage, otherwise understood as simple, protracted, and dynamic

⁵² Sargent-Baur, ed., *The Romance of Tristran* (see note 14), 32–33, lines 1155–230. See now also Albrecht Classen, “The Marginalized Figure of the Dwarf and the Leper: Disability in the World of Tristan and Isolde and Beyond,” to appear in *Studi medievali*.

⁵³ One of the two regions in the parietal lobe that receive and process sensory activity.

touch.⁵⁴ In the daily life of the enclosed medieval leper, all three of these levels of touch were extremely limited, resulting in the absence of haptic perception, and to a deficiency in the haptic processing of data. On the rare occasion that the spatial barrier was not maintained, the disabled tactile perception would have interfered with the leper's ability to process touch, as s/he would not have experienced it, even while the body was in fact being touched.

These three levels of touch, simple, protracted, and dynamic, are experienced by means of the somatosensory processes. In terms of the lived experience of our medieval leper, somatosensory processing influenced a number of brain processes. These include, though are not limited to, the processing of memory and emotional processing.⁵⁵ As a result, touch aids in affiliative behavior, the formation and maintenance of social bonds, and “facilitates a footing of trust or compliance.”⁵⁶ In the absence of touch, one would expect these processes to be altered, leading to a change in how the brain functions; I would theorize that this change manifested itself in the life of the leper in altered behavioral patterns.

Processing Tactile and Haptic Perception

In order to understand the claim of deviant behavior in the leper as a result of altered brain processes, it would be helpful to spell out and conceptualize what exactly is happening in the brain during the processing of tactile and haptic perception. Over the last two decades, tremendous work has been done in the field of neuroscientific research within the contexts of lived experience, social exchange, emotional discourse, and sociophysiology.⁵⁷ The goal of all of these studies has been, as Cozolino notes, to understand “individuals within the context of the

54 “‘Simple’ touch involves brief, intentional contact in a relatively restricted location on the body surface of the receiver during a social interaction ‘Protracted’ touch involves longer and often mutual skin-to-skin contact between individuals and usually includes components of pressure ... ‘[D]ynamic’ touch involves continuous movement over the skin from one point to another and can often be repetitious.” India Morrison, Line Löken, and Håkan Olausson, “The Skin as a Social Organ,” *Experimental Brain Research* 204 (2010): 305–14.

55 Alberto Gallace and Charles Spence, “The Science of Interpersonal Touch: An Overview,” *Neuroscience and Biobehavioral Reviews* 34 (2010): 246–59.

56 Morrison, Löken, and Olausson, “The Skin as a Social Organ” (see note 54), 306.

57 Cozolino, *Neuroscience of Human Relationships* (see note 48); Morrison, Löken, and Olausson, “The Skin as a Social Organ” (see note 54); Gallace and Spence, “The Science of Interpersonal Touch” (see note 55). These three works represent a synthesis of the scholarship of hundreds of scholars who have contributed to the field over the course of the last few decades.

relationships in which they were born, *develop, and live their lives.*⁵⁸ These types of studies allow us to theorize about the lived experience of the medieval leper in that they attempt to explain how the evolving brain functions in the social world.

Throughout the course of one's life, how one engages with one's social environment and how that environment in turn impacts one's movement, understanding, and experience all contribute to how the brain is formed. Applying the basic principle of information exchange in the human brain to the larger context of individuals impacting one another's brain growth and evolution,⁵⁹ Cozolino writes that the brain should not be considered a "fully formed structure, but ... as a dynamic process ... undergoing constant development and reconstruction across the lifespan."⁶⁰ One's social environment is peopled with those individuals with whom one comes into contact, both figuratively and literally. These moments of contact shape experience as the brain processes interpersonal data and the functioning of social networks.⁶¹ Cozolino notes that, "Without mutually stimulating interactions, people and neurons wither and die. In neurons this process is called apoptosis; in humans it is called depression, grief, and suicide."⁶²

Within this social environment, tactile and haptic perception play an enormous role in the nature of brain changes. Specific parts of the brain are activated when a person experiences tactile and haptic perception ; these parts of the brain are connected with various cognitive and behavioral functions. For example, the somatosensory cortex is largely responsible for processing physical experiences; whatever the bodily experience, this portion of the brain turns it into information which can be used to measure and comprehend said experience.⁶³ The somatosensory cortex is experience-dependent in that what is processed allows the individual to connect and engage in social environments by employing empathy and understanding.⁶⁴ Additionally, the insula cortex, also responsible for processing elements of touch perception, connects the external experience of touch

⁵⁸ My italics. Cozolino, *Neuroscience of Human Relationships* (see note 48), 8.

⁵⁹ Cozolino, *Neuroscience of Human Relationships* (see note 48), 5.

⁶⁰ Cozolino, *Neuroscience of Human Relationships* (see note 48), 50.

⁶¹ "Neurons have three sequential levels of information exchange that are called first, second, and third messenger systems. They are (1) the communication across the synapse that (2) changes the internal biochemistry of the cell, which, in turn, (3) activates mRNA (*messenger ribonucleic acid*, the material that translates protein into new brain structure) and protein synthesis to change cellular structure. It is through these processes that the brain changes in response to experience." Cozolino, *Neuroscience of Human Relationships* (see note 48), 5.

⁶² Cozolino, *Neuroscience of Human Relationships* (see note 48), 11.

⁶³ Cozolino, *Neuroscience of Human Relationships* (see note 48), 54.

⁶⁴ Cozolino, *Neuroscience of Human Relationships* (see note 48), 55.

with the internal experiences of emotions; this connection results in behavioral responses.⁶⁵

Interestingly, this same part of the brain, the insula cortex, also processes information with respect to eye gaze and the “awareness of untrustworthiness,” which, as discussed above, was also impaired in the leper.⁶⁶ In terms of the information the leper should have processed by means of his/ her insula and somatosensory cortices, the data actually received would have been limited as a result of his/ her impaired haptic and tactile perceptions, as well as his/ her impaired vision, and the possibly impaired olfactory and auditory perceptions.⁶⁷ In the absence of touch, one would expect patterns of information processing to be disrupted or altered, and consequently, that the behavior of the leper would be equally impacted.

Divergent Behavior and the Absence of Touch

Living within the spatial barrier, the leper did not experience touch in the same way that his/ her healthy able-bodied neighbor could. Theoretically, impaired tactile and haptic perceptions would have resulted in brain changes which would have influenced the behavior of the leper. I would argue that this influence resulted in forms of behavior which deviated from the “norm.” If we consider the lepers led by Ivain in the story of *Romance of Tristran* and those described in Gilbertus Anglicus’s *De Lepra*, the lepers’ deviant behavior included rage and violence; within literature these often take the form of the rape of a healthy woman. Rather than discard the claims of deviant behavior in these dangerous, leprous figures as mere characterizations of “otherness,” let us instead consider them in terms of modern neuro-scientific research on the subject of interpersonal touch.

Certainly, the lepers in the tales of *Romance of Tristran* are fictional characters whose real-life counterparts were undoubtedly less violent. Nevertheless, the image of the violent leper could certainly have its origins in the real-life divergent behavior of the leper who lived with limited interpersonal touch. It is for this reason that we begin not with the literary constructs, but with Gilbertus Anglicus’s description of the leper in his diagnostic manual *De Lepra*. Gilbertus’s claim

⁶⁵ Cozolino, *Neuroscience of Human Relationships* (see note 48), 56.

⁶⁶ Cozolino, *Neuroscience of Human Relationships* (see note 48), 56.

⁶⁷ With the loss of cartilage and tissue around the ears and nose, it is possible that these two senses could also have been mildly impaired.

that lepers “become enraged more easily than usual” frames our paradigm of the affected mind of the oft-untouched leprous body.⁶⁸

In the context of the sequestered medieval leper, we can also consider inverting these studies in order to explain the social effects of the spatial barrier, that is, this pervasive lack of touch.⁶⁹ According to Morrison, Löken, and Olausson, hedonic touch “may serve as a foundation for affiliative behavior; ... it may provide a mechanism for the formation and maintenance of social bonds; ... [and] it is a nonverbal means for the communication of emotions”⁷⁰ These building blocks of social exchange can be understood as (1) the framework within which one forms attachments, (2) the means by which one accomplishes this, and (3) the way in which one communicates the forming of said attachment. In the absence of these three, it is likely that, as a byproduct of the spatial barrier placed around them, medieval lepers expressed themselves in ways that differed from the non-leper populace.

These studies suggest that touch may be more effective at “activating emotional circuits.”⁷¹ Furthermore, the processing of memory is linked with touch, while memory and touch together have been linked to emotional processing.⁷² Several studies have illustrated that the part of the brain stimulated by touch is responsible for producing an “emotionally relevant response to given sensory experience.”⁷³ Medieval and modern medical practices actually seem to run parallel.⁷⁴

68 Gilbertus Anglicus, “The Symptoms of Leprosy,” *Medieval Medicine* (see note 43), 341.

69 Morrison, Löken, and Olausson, “The Skin as a Social Organ” (see note 54), 306, 312. They have argued that “hedonically positive touch in human social interactions is ubiquitous despite cultural differences in its regulation, with roles ranging from the casual to the sexual.” As sexual touch elicits a completely different type of reaction in the brain, I focus only on this more casual experience of hedonic touch. They have further noted, “Specialized pathways for socially and affectively relevant touch may begin at the level of the skin ... Major functional roles for social touch include affiliative behavior and communication.” Here, “hedonic positive touch” refers to the casual and friendly interactions a person experiences on a daily basis with acquaintances and strangers alike. Much of the current research on this sort of interpersonal touch focuses on modern *pan-cultural* exchanges which look at the human brain. As such, I would argue that the conclusions from a select number of these narrowly focused neurological studies can, and indeed should, be applied to medieval lepers.

70 Morrison, Löken, and Olausson, “The Skin as a Social Organ” (see note 54), 306.

71 Gallace and Spence, “The Science of Interpersonal Touch” (see note 55), 252.

72 Gallace and Spence, “The Science of Interpersonal Touch” (see note 55), 252.

73 Gallace and Spence, “The Science of Interpersonal Touch” (see note 55), 252.

74 In consultation with Allyson C. Cook, M.D. (Parkland Memorial Hospital, Dallas, TX), with regard to the neurobiological influence on lack of touch, this conversation continues to develop with a specific eye toward the application of these theories to modern medical practices in-hos-

As the leper moved through crowded spaces, remaining untouched due to the spatial barrier, those circuits which would have otherwise been activated, allowing him/ her to form attachments, to create and process new sensory-based memories, to connect the external experience of touch with the internal experiences of emotions, would, like the body within which it resided, remain untouched. Theoretically, depriving the somatosensory cortex and the insula cortex of tactile and haptic data affects the way one understands and practices empathy within one's social environment. As Cozolino has noted, "It is the power of being with others that shapes our brains."⁷⁵ This missed connection would have resulted in behavioral changes. Given this context, we should perhaps understand Gilbertus' comment on lepers flying into rages as an observation rather than as an asper-sion.

In the case of the leper-leader Ivain in the *Romance of Tristran* and the others who seize and promise to assault Iseult rather than have King Mark burn her at the stake, the reader is, all at once, confronted with both heinous violence and the realization that the crime is being committed by one who cannot fully experience his own villainous brutality. A rape committed by an individual with impaired tactile and haptic perceptions suggests a seemingly paradoxical crime. Obviously, the goal of attacking Iseult was meant to be read as sadistic, predatory, and cruel, rather than sexual. However, the irony of an attacker who cannot actually *feel* the one he is attacking may have been lost on the audience.

Cozolino notes that in order to participate and function in social groups, "we not only need to process and utilize social information, but also inhibit self-serv-

pital. In Dr. Cook's daily work, when a patient gets an infection (MRSA, C Dif, VRE, etc.) that is deemed a danger to others, mostly secondary to its contagious nature or limited treatment options, the patient is placed on 'isolation' to prevent patient to patient transmission via healthcare providers. This entails a sign on the door and the requirement that all who enter don a gown, gloves, and sometimes a mask, and in some instances (i.e., Ebola) there is a completely separate ward. There is an inherent reluctance by staff and physicians to enter these rooms due to having to wear all the gear as well as, in some cases, fear of catching the disease (though this is rare, we note again Ebola). This invariably results in a complete lack of skin to skin touch from provider to patient. This is also present on reverse isolation patients (i.e., cancer patients who are at a heightened risk of infection due to chemotherapy so they are isolated from people who could make them sick). As the patients who are most often placed on isolation are the same patients who are often the most ill, Cook wonders, and I along with her, if there is a quantifiable impact long term. We know that ICU patients have much higher post hospitalization incidence of depression, presumably due to isolation in the ICU as well as critical illness, but Cook wonders if the lack of touch contributes. I thank Dr. Allyson Cook for her invaluable input and work in the medical community.

75 Cozolino, *Neuroscience of Human Relationships* (see note 48), 9.

ing, aggressive, and sexual impulses.”⁷⁶ We know that haptic and tactile processing causes the somatosensory and insula cortices to engender empathy; without those emotional circuits having been activated by means of hedonic touch, divergent behavior could be expressed in explosive ways. The inability to experience empathy due to touch deprivation could absolutely lead one to act out cruelly and violently. Whether it was inadvertent or not, the vile lepers of the *Romance of Tristran* embody the most extreme consequences of living without experiencing touch.

When Robert of Courtalain signed his country house over to Grand-Beaulieu in 1160 in exchange for the leprosarium agreeing to care for his child, the spatial barrier encircled his son completely, cutting him off from his family and former community. As opposed to our word for leprosy, which comes to us from the Greek term, *lepros*, for scaly, several other languages have named the diseased body based not on a medical characteristic but on the social consequence of the disease. Samuel Kotteck has noted that leprosy “is the disease that leads to segregation”: in Aramaic, leprosy is *segirū*, that which isolates; in German, it is *Aussatz*, that which causes exclusion.⁷⁷

The medieval leper was enveloped by layers of space that distanced him/her from his/her society. Each layer was separately constructed, yet together they had the effect of both insulating and isolating the leper. Hygiene provided the overt motive for creating these layers of separation, be they social, medical, juridical, or physical. This spatial barrier was the predominant feature of the lived experience of the leper in the high and late Middle Ages. Deprived of haptic perception due to the imposed barrier, and tactile perception due to the impairing consequences of the disease itself, the medieval leper, neurologically impacted, moved through the crowded world, isolated, affected yet untouched.

76 Cozolino, *Neuroscience of Human Relationships* (see note 48), 22.

77 Samuel S. Kotteck, *Medicine and Hygiene in the Works of Flavius Josephus* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1994), 43 n. 64.

Debra L. Stoudt

Elemental Well-Being: Water and Its Attributes in Selected Writings of Hildegard of Bingen and Georgius Agricola

Introduction

The relationship among the elements, the humors, and the notion of well-being, established by Empedocles in the fifth century B.C.E., was recognized throughout medieval times and into the earlier modern era. In his treatise *On Airs, Waters, and Places* Hippocrates (d. ca. 380 B.C.E.) drew attention to the impact of the physical environment, exemplified by three of the four elements, on people's health. Together with the commentary by Galen (d. ca. 216 C.E.) on the Hippocratic work, the tradition was embraced and expanded upon in the East by, e.g., Avicenna (Ibn Sīnā) (d. 1037) and Ibn Ridwān (d. 1061).¹ In the West there were also contributions in the intervening centuries to the topic, e.g., the *De natura rerum* of Isidore of Seville (550–636 C.E.) and of the Venerable Bede (ca. 703)²; however, Hippocratic and Galenic ideas remained largely unknown until the translation of Arabic works.

In the subsequent centuries there was a strong reliance on and adherence to the theories and ideas of antiquity; nonetheless, fresh interpretations occasionally appeared that afforded the elements new roles in healing, preventing disease, and maintaining health. This study examines two such descriptions of water from the German-speaking territories, one from the twelfth century and the other from the sixteenth, and explores how they informed ideas regarding health

¹ John Aberth examines aspects of this topic in *An Environmental History of the Middle Ages: The Crucible of Nature* (London and New York: Routledge, 2013), especially "Part I: Air, water, earth," 11–76. *Medieval Islamic Medicine: Ibn Riḍwān's Treatise 'On the Prevention of Bodily Ills in Egypt'*, intro. and trans. Michael W. Dols (Berkeley, Los Angeles, CA, and London: University of California Press, 1984), 8–24, summarizes key Hippocratic and Galenic influences.

² Lin Ferrand discusses Bede's adaptation of Isidore's work in "The Hydrologic Cycle in Bede's *De natura rerum*," *The Nature and Function of Water, Baths, Bathing, and Hygiene from Antiquity through the Renaissance*, ed. Cynthia Kosso and Anne Scott. *Technology and Change in History*, 2 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2009), 361–404.

Debra L. Stoudt, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg

and hygiene during their time. Given the relationship among the elements, there is some discussion of the role of air, fire, and earth as well; the physical proximity of water and earth makes their pairing a natural one, although the pervasiveness of air and its influence on both water and earth have been recognized since Galen.³ In medieval Europe, ancient thermal and mineral springs that had been abandoned and forgotten were re-established and in the course of the Middle Ages new aquatic sources with beneficial qualities were discovered; these development resulted in the ‘taking the waters,’ a common practice in the seventeenth century. Similarly, medicinal earth was detected in German-speaking lands, frequently near bodies of water, and its salutary value was recognized.

Both the twelfth and sixteenth centuries were not only periods of great learning and rediscovery but also eras during which cosmological, medical, and alchemical ideas were intermingled. The texts below reflect such an amalgamation of knowledge from classical and early medieval masters with new perspectives of their respective compiler or author: the twelfth-century examples are taken from the works of the learned though non-traditionally educated Benedictine *magistra* Hildegard of Bingen (1098–1179) and those from the sixteenth-century are exemplified by the writings of Georgius Agricola (1494–1555), a university-trained scientist inspired by the ideas of Renaissance humanism. The elemental descriptions found in the medical-scientific works identified with Hildegard are informed by her theology; her works provide a cosmological understanding of the elements and relate them to practical use. Agricola’s description of waters reflect the method of scientific observation emerging in the 1500s.⁴ A brief survey of the discovery and re-discovery of salutary waters in the later Middle Ages serves as a bridge between the two descriptions.

Hildegard of Bingen

Known as a visionary, prophetess, and correspondent of kings and emperors – also as a composer of ethereal music for her community and the author of an

³ Aberth, *An Environmental History* (see note 1), 53. The grouping of air, fire, and water based on their more transformative nature has been posited by Charles C. Connell, “From Spiritual Necessity to Instrument of Torture: Water in the Middle Ages,” *The Nature and Function of Water* (see note 2), 463–78; especially 465.

⁴ See, for example, the contributions to *Histories of Scientific Observation*, ed. Lorraine Daston and Elizabeth Lunbeck (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), especially Gianna Pomata, “Observation Rising: Birth of an Epistemic Genre, 1500–1600,” 45–80.

unknown language – Hildegard of Bingen possessed substantial medical knowledge as well as a keen interest in the healing arts. Before assuming magistral duties at Rupertsberg, Hildegard may have served in the role of *pigmentarius*, the individual who contributed to the care and cure of the sick by gathering ingredients and preparing medicines.⁵ She relied heavily on cures derived from nature; thus, it is not surprising that the works prepared under her direction present a close interplay between cosmology and the physical world.⁶

Hildegard is commonly considered today to be the compiler or editor of two medical-scientific works, the *Physica* and the *Cause et cure*. The former consists of nine books, each of which describes the characteristics of selected things in a category of nature – plants, elements, trees, stones, fish, birds, animals, reptiles, and metals – and some remedies as well. The causes alluded to in the title of the latter work are theological and scientific explanations for the creation of the universe and of humankind presented in the first two of its six books. Book 2 explores the elements and the humors and introduces the catalogue of conditions and maladies that continues in the two subsequent books; both elements and humors are referenced again in Book 5, the final section, in the context of a medical discussion of the examination of urine and feces and as part of a theological excursus concerning punishment from God that manifests itself as fire that gives rise to heated waters in the earth.

The discovery in 1983 of a new manuscript and two variants of the *Physica* resulted in renewed focus on the text and a clearer understanding of its evolution. In the introduction to his edition of the *Physica*, Reiner Hildebrandt posits that the original work, by Hildegard herself, consisted of two columns of text: a foundational text (*Grundtext*), later known as the *Liber simplicis medicinae*, and an additional text (*Zusatztext*), which became the *Liber compositae medicinae*.⁷ The

5 Victoria Sweet discusses this idea in *Rooted in the Earth, Rooted in the Sky: Hildegard of Bingen and Premodern Medicine* (New York and London: Routledge, 2006), 60–63.

6 Heinrich Schipperges relates the *magistra*'s medical views to her world view in *Hildegard of Bingen: Healing and the Nature of the Cosmos*, trans. John A. Broadwin (1995; Princeton, NJ: 1997). Of particular interest are his comments regarding the integration of organisms into their physical environment, the *querela elementorum* (“complaint of the elements”) contained in the *Liber vitae meritorum*, the second of Hildegard's three visionary writings, and the ecological nature of humanity's duty on earth, 56–58.

7 Hildegard von Bingen. *Physica. Liber subtilitatum diversarum naturarum creaturarum. Textkritische Ausgabe*, ed. Reiner Hildebrandt and Thomas Gloning, Vol. 1 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2010), 3–9. This edition is hereafter identified as *Physica*; it is the source of Latin citations. The most complete English translation of the work is *Hildegard von Bingen's Physica. The Complete English Translation of Her Classic Work on Health and Healing*, trans. Priscilla Throop (Rochester, VT: Healing Arts Press, 1998). The translation combines Books 5 and 6 and does not

former, in modified form, is the *Physica*, and the latter, reworked after Hildegard's death, forms the central portion of the *Cause et cure*.⁸ This circumstance provides a possible explanation for the varying descriptions of elements found in each work and for the relationship between them: the *Grundtext* in the *Physica* offers detailed commentary on specific waters, whereas the commentary in the *Cause* presents a cosmic framework, the creation of the world, and contextualizes water in terms of this event. The following discussion begins with the broader context of the *Cause*.

The description of the elements found in Book 1 of the *Cause* is informed by a hierarchy identified in Book 2, namely that between the celestial elements – fire and air – and the terrestrial ones – water and earth; the former are identified as superior:

Plural igitur uel pauciora quam quatuor esse non possunt, et ex duobus generibus constant: superiorum et inferiorum. Nam superiora sunt celestia, inferiora uero terrestria; | et que in superioribus uiuunt, inpalpabilia sunt et ex igne et aere sunt. Que uero in inferioribus uersantur, palpabilia et formata corpora sunt et ex aqua et limo constant.

[There cannot be more or less than four elements. They exist in two ways, the higher and the lower. The higher elements are the heavenly, the lower ones are the earthly. What exists in the higher group is not accessible and consists of fire and air; however, what exists in the lower one can be obtained, has bodies fashioned, and consists of water and earth.]⁹

The topic is elaborated upon in a section later in Book 2 that establishes the relationship between heavenly and spiritual and between earthly and corporeal. The passage makes clear the connection between the cosmos and humankind since God made humans from all four elements:

Homo namque ex quatuor elementis creatus constat, quorum duo spiritalia, duo carnalia sunt, ignis scilicet et aer spiritalia, aqua uero et terra carnalia. Et hec quatuor in homine in unum se coniungunt, ipsum quoque coquunt, ut sanguineus et carnalis cum omnibus

include sections found only in the recently discovered manuscript and variants; however, where available English quotations are from this translation, cited as Throop, *Physica*.

⁸ Laurence Moulinier also examines this topic in the introduction to her edition, *Beate Hildegardis Cause et Cure* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2003), LVII–LXIII; she discusses the medieval titles of the medical works, LI–LVII. Moulinier's edition is hereafter identified as *Cause*; Latin citations are from this edition. The most complete English translation of the work to date is *Holistic Healing. Hildegard of Bingen*, ed. Mary Palmquist and John Kulas, trans. Manfred Pawlik, Patrick Madigan, and John Kulas (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1994), which is based on the 1903 edition of the *Cause* by Paul Kaiser; English quotations, where available, are from this translation.

⁹ *Cause* (see note 8), 71; *Holistic Healing* (see note 8), 37.

appendiciis suis fiat ... Deus etenim sic hominem de terre creauit limo, quod ipse cum spiramine anime, terra aquosa, ignea et aerea consistit, et ita anima hominem cum quatuor elementis mouet, quia per terram formata figura cum digito dei consistit et per aquam miscetur, per aerem mouetur atque per ignem coquitur.

[Man is formed from the four elements and has his foundation in them. Of these, two of the elements are of a spiritual nature and two of a fleshly nature. Fire and air are spiritual; water and earth are corporeal. All four join together in unity in a person, and they also heat him in such a way that he and all his appendages become bloody and fleshy ... For God made man out of the clay of the earth so that he consists, with the breath of the soul, of fluid, fiery, and airy elements. Similarly, the soul moves mankind by means of the four elements: his form, fashioned from the earth, endures by the finger of God and is mixed with water, moved by the air, and heated by fire.]¹⁰

In Book 1 of the *Cause* each of the four elements is introduced, first the celestial and then terrestrial, and the forces (*uires*) of each are identified. The characterization of water is by far the most detailed.¹¹ The element is said to possess fifteen forces, although only six are specifically named: warmth, air, moistness, flooding, rapidity, and motion.¹² Despite the omission of the majority of characteristics, this selection provides a sense of the breadth of the element's power. Warmth and air emphasize water's relationship to the celestial elements. Through moistness it supports all of creation, providing trees with sap, fruits with taste, and plants with their greenness. Its life-sustaining force is likened to that of the Ten Commandments and the Pentateuch – perhaps the real reason behind the reference to fifteen forces – and, arising from a living source (*de uiuente fonte*), it also can wash away all filth. The final three forces foreshadow less positive traits of water, although its potential for destruction is explicitly referenced only with regard to the union of water and fire (here as the heat of the sun); however, in a calm state this comingling yields seeds, namely salt.

The overflowing sea is identified as the source of rivers, and springs from such waters are salty. The combination of elements is explored further through analogy: the waters are to the planet earth as the body is to the heart – surrounding, saturating, and protecting. The relationship between water and earth is then compared to that between water and air: as in Genesis, waters are both above and

¹⁰ *Cause* (see note 8), 99–100; *Holistic Healing* (see note 8), 58.

¹¹ *Cause* (see note 8), 44–54; *Holistic Healing* (see note 8), 19–26. Sweet, *Rooted in the Earth* (see note 5), 65–91, provides extensive commentary on Book 1 of the *Cause*, focusing on the element of air and contending that Hildegard had specific winds in mind in her writings (85). She suggests that a comparable analysis could be performed for any of the other three elements (69); this study perhaps offers the foundation for such an analysis of water.

¹² *Cause* (see note 8), 44–45; *Holistic Healing* (see note 8), 19–20.

below the firmament, and both envelop the earth.¹³ At this point the focus shifts to the sea sand that has been lying in the East since the beginning of time as well as stones in the sand; these contain curatives that would relieve humans of all illness, except that the waters are so deep that the remedies are unattainable. The depth of the sand and of the shoreline in the East precludes flooding; in contrast, the overflow of the banks of other rivers results in the gathering of dirt as well as the waste of people and animals.

The reference to the East serves as an introduction to the subsequent description of waters, which can be divided into two parts. The former differentiates waters based on their geography and salinity, presenting waters originating in the East, West, South, Northeast, middle of the North, or northeastern corner of the Western region in turn; each is characterized by properties such as heat and cold, practical uses, such as cooking, drinking, bathing, and washing, and curative value.¹⁴ Those from the East possess the greatest number of positive attributes. Salty waters from this region can be used for drinking and cooking; they will cure a sick person but can prove harmful to a healthy individual. Waters from the East lacking salt are good for almost every use but have a negative impact on the skin. All other waters exhibit at least one quality that makes them less desirable: they are not very clean, are murky or dark in color, cause plague or disease, or contain worms that are poisonous. Despite these limitations, most can be used at least for cooking, if necessary, as long as they are boiled and then left to cool. Several can be used as remedies for evil or bad humors and occasionally for more specific conditions.¹⁵

The second section of commentary addresses other types of water. Marshy water is poisonous due to contamination with the earth. It may only be useful for washing but can be used for other purposes if boiled. Standing well water is preferable to bubbling fountain waters, the latter being hard and less useful for cooking. However, water from bubbling sources is purified by earth, sand, or stones and thus is superior to river water, which can be contaminated by the air. The dangers of such waters are described in detail, with the repeated warning that the water must be boiled, if there is a necessity to drink it. Despite its bitterness, rain water has curative attributes, although it can prove harmful to healthy

¹³ Sweet, *Rooted in the Earth* (see note 5), offers a linear and a radial representation of the cosmos in Book 1, 66–67.

¹⁴ *Cause* (see note 8), 48–54; *Holistic Healing* (see note 8), 22–27.

¹⁵ Sweet, *Rooted in the Earth* (see note 5), examines in detail Hildegard's understanding of the humors, 99–123, positing three different kinds of humors in the *Cause* and noting the use of *tepidum*, *spuma*, *humidum*, and *siccum* in addition blood, bile, phlegm, and melancholy, which are not identified as humors *per se*, 122–23.

people. The section concludes with admonitions concerning snow water, which is characterized as especially harmful and as a source of intestinal maladies. Even more hazardous is the ingestion of water from a heavy shower or from hail, which can result in death.¹⁶

At this point the *Cause* turns attention to the final element, earth, and its forces, seven in number, which are likened to the seven days of the biblical creation.¹⁷ The earth is partially cold in the summer, warm in the winter, the qualities being dictated by the warmth of the sun. Its powers are related to the seasons of the year, especially times of budding and dormancy, and these are divinely determined as well. Whereas one might expect a description of types of earth comparable to those of the waters, the *Cause* does not provide it; instead, the relatively brief characterization of earth is followed by a discussion of trees, grains, and grapevines, presented according to geographic region in the same order as the waters above: East, West, South, and North. The impact of waters – and to a lesser extent air and heat (fire) – on the fecundity of each region is central and leads to a return in the final section of Book 1 to the topic of water, namely rain and the potentially harmful effects of heavy rain on the earth and its fruit.¹⁸ The use in the *Cause* of general directions – East and West – and reference to general poor health – bad humors – as opposed to specific illnesses lends a more generic tone to the description. However, this is fitting with the purpose of the work, an interpretation of the cosmic and the theological.

Book 2 of the *Cause* establishes connections among the elements, the humors, and the created world to explain the nature of humans, the process of conception in the created world, and specific characteristics of animals and humans. Although division and hierarchization of elements is alluded to in this book, as noted above, the focus here is actually the inseparability of the elements from each other and their interaction with each other.¹⁹ The topic is revisited several times, first in spiritual terms and later with physical implications as an introduction to the description of conditions to be diagnosed and cured that comprises much of the rest of the work. The connection between fire and water and the origin of water's liquid nature are explained through the interpolation of portions of Genesis 1:2: "Aqua enim frigida erat et non fluebat in initio creaturarum, cum

¹⁶ Roberta J. Magnusson provides a brief summary of the various types of drinking water presented in the *Cause* in his comprehensive study *Water Technology in the Middle Ages. Cities, Monasteries, and Waterworks after the Roman Empire* (Baltimore, MD, and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 5.

¹⁷ *Cause* (see note 8), 54–55; *Holistic Healing* (see note 8), 27.

¹⁸ *Cause* (see note 8), 57; *Holistic Healing* (see note 8), 29.

¹⁹ *Cause* (see note 8), 68 and 69–70; *Holistic Healing* (see note 8), 35 and 37.

‘terra erat inanis et uacua’, sed ‘spiritus domini ferebatur super aquas’ et eas calefecit, ut ignem in se haberent et ut liquefacte fluerent.”²⁰ Whereas fire is related to blood through water, it also manifests itself in the human soul; both fire and water are associated with the brain and reason.²¹ In contrast, the body itself is the realm of water and earth, which themselves enjoy a symbiotic relationship: “Sed aqua coagulatio terre est et constringit et domat eam, ne diffluat. Terra uero sustinet et continet aquam et facit ei recta itinera et est sustentatio eius superius, ut rectum iter habeat, et sub se, ne iniuste ascendat.”²² The dichotomy between spiritual and corporeal elements is reiterated as a brief preface to the story of the creation of Adam,²³ which is expanded upon to identify specific internal and external organs and their relationship to the various elements:

Nam cum deus hominem crearet, limus per aquam conglutinatus est, ex quo homo formatus est, misitque deus in formam illam ‘spiraculum uite’ igneum et aereum. Et quia forma hominis ex limo et aqua fuit, ex igne eiusdem spiraculi uite limus caro factus est, et ex aere eius aqua, per quam limus conglutinatus est, sanguis effecta est.

[When God made man, the earth out of which man was formed was glued together by water; God sent the breath of life – fire and air – into this form made from earth and water. Because the human form was made from earth and water, the earth became flesh through the fire of this breath of life and through the air, the water, through which the earth was held together, became blood.]²⁴

The same ideas are repeated in slightly different fashion with Adam’s creation; remarkable here is the role of the elements and the power they afford Adam as he is shaped and brought to life:

20 *Cause* (see note 8), 68; “At the beginning of creation, the water was cold, and it did not flow since the earth was still empty and dry. However, the Spirit of the Lord hovered over the waters and warmed them so that they had fire in them, and they became liquid and began to melt,” *Holistic Healing* (see note 8), 36.

21 Elsewhere in Hildegard’s œuvre, both elements are related to the Divine, e.g., the song “O ignis Spiritus Paracliti” in Barbara Newman, trans., *Saint Hildegard of Bingen. Symphonia: A Critical Edition of the Symphonia armonie celestium revelationum* [Symphony of the Harmony of Celestial Revelations] (Ithaca, NY, and London: Cornell University Press, 1988), 148–51, and 281–82.

22 *Cause* (see note 8), 69. “Water is also a binding agent for the earth; it holds it together and binds it so that it does not flow apart. The earth carries the water and holds it together, creates for it the right path, and guides it on its surface so that it takes the right way and does not well up inappropriately under the earth,” *Holistic Healing* (see note 8), 36.

23 *Cause* (see note 8), 71. “Spiritus enim ignei et aerei sunt, homo autem aquosus et limosus est.” *Holistic Healing* (see note 8), 38: “The spirits consist of fire and air; however, man consists of water and earth.”

24 *Cause* (see note 8), 71; *Holistic Healing* (see note 8), 38.

Adam enim cum terra fuit, ignis eum excitauit, et aer eum suscitauit, et aqua eum perfudit, quod totus mouebatur. Tunc deus soporem in eum misit, et in hiis uiribus cactus est, ita quod caro eius per ignem estuabat et quod per aerem spirauit, et quod sicut molendinum aqua in eo circuiuit. Qui postquam euigilauit, propheta celestium fuit et sciens in omni uia creature et in omni arte erat.

[When Adam was nothing but earth, fire aroused him, air woke him, and water poured through him so that he began to move. Then God caused him to fall into a deep sleep. He was cooked by these powers so that his flesh became hot because of fire and he breathed because of air and the water flowed over him as in a mill. When he woke up, he was a prophet of heavenly realities and understood every power of creation and how to do everything.]²⁵

Adam derives his great strength from the elements and his virility from the earth – a characteristic that Eve, who came from Adam's rib, does not share.²⁶

As the creation story continues with Adam's fall and expulsion from paradise, the description of the flood allows for a re-introduction of the elemental theme. With the flood the natural environment is transformed: rocks and stones previously covered by earth are revealed, rivers take shape, and the newly formed waterways separate people from animals.²⁷

The indispensability of the elements to the created world in general and to humankind is discussed yet again, this time with a focus on the essential role of each elements to fulfill its duty in order for the earth to prosper; the elements and their related humors must act in balance for the well-being of each person:

Nunc autem, ut supradictum est, quemadmodum elementa mundum simul continent, sic etiam elementa compago corporis hominis sunt, atque effusio et officia eorum ita se diuidunt per hominem, ut insimul contineantur, uelut etiam per mundum effusa sunt et operantur ... Et ut mundus in prosperitate est, cum elementa bene et ordinate officia sua exercent ... sic etiam, cum elementa ordinate in homine operantur, eum conseruant et sanum reddunt; sed cum in eo discordant, eum infirmum faciunt et occidunt. Nam coagulationes humorum a calore, humiditate, sanguine et a carne in hominem descendentes et in eo existentes, si cum tranquillitate et iusto temperamento in illo operantur, sanitatem habent ...

[As the above-mentioned elements hold the world together, so in the same way are the elements responsible for the well-being of the human body. They are spread through his body and divide their tasks so that man is maintained by them ...The earth prospers when the elements fulfill their duties in a good and orderly fashion ...If the elements work properly in a human being, they sustain him and keep him healthy. However, if they do not live harmoniously in him they disturb him and make him sick. If the connections of the humors – that

25 *Cause* (see note 8), 75–76; *Holistic Healing* (see note 8), 40.

26 *Cause* (see note 8), 77; *Holistic Healing* (see note 8), 41.

27 *Cause* (see note 8), 81–82; *Holistic Healing* (see note 8), 43–44.

come from heat, moisture, blood and flesh and which are all present in a person, – work in peace and maintain their correct proportion in him, they bring health with them ...]²⁸

Despite the comments earlier that identify man with the lower, terrestrial elements, all four are present in him: fire in warmth, air in breath, water in blood, and earth in flesh.²⁹

At this point attention turns to the humors and individual cures are presented. However, later in Book 2 the theme of the elements returns yet again with several sections in which the chaotic world is described. Here their destructive nature is revealed, as a consequence of mankind's sinfulness: "Nam quando homines se inuicem intermiscent cum preliis, terroribus, odio et inuidia ac in contrariis peccatis, tunc euertunt se in alium et in contrarium modum aut caloris aut frigoris aut magnarum effusionum et inundationum."³⁰ When the proper proportion of the humors is not maintained, a person will be destroyed physically or mentally; and when the elements come into conflict with each other on the Last Day, the comparable result will occur to the earth.³¹

In contrast to the extensive references to the elements found in the *Cause*, their discussion in the *Physica* is relatively brief, with Book II, which is devoted to the topic, being the shortest of the nine books in the work.³² The book contains no explicit discussion of fire; only one of its 14 sections deals with air, four reference the earth, and the remaining nine are devoted to water.³³ A common thread throughout is the element's capacity to stimulate growth and new life in the natural world – a physical counterpart to the spiritual concept of *viriditas*.

The discussion of water proceeds from a general introduction to details of specific rivers. As in the *Cause*, water is identified as emanating from a living source (*de vivente fonte*), and, given this origin, it is able to wash away all filth.³⁴

28 *Cause* (see note 8), 83–84; *Holistic Healing* (see note 8), 44–45.

29 *Cause* (see note 8), 83; *Holistic Healing* (see note 8), 45.

30 *Cause* (see note 8), 91; "For when men degenerate into fighting, terrible deeds, hate, envy, and sinful exchanges, then the elements transform themselves into an opposing and corrective force such as heat or cold or great deluges and floods," *Holistic Healing* (see note 8), 52.

31 *Cause* (see note 8), 93; *Holistic Healing* (see note 8), 53.

32 Laurence Moulinier examines this book in *Le manuscrit perdu à Strasbourg: Enquête sur l'oeuvre scientifique de Hildegarde*. Série Histoire Ancienne et Médiévale, 35 (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, and Saint-Denis: Presses Universitaires de Vincennes, 1995), 145–68, in the chapter titled "Les énigmes du 'Livre des éléments.'"

33 *Physica* (see note 7), Vol. 1, 171–77; Throop, *Physica* (see note 7), 99–103. The Florence and Wolfenbüttel manuscripts of the *Physica* include in Book II a section on salt that is found in Book I.

34 *Physica* (see note 7), Vol. 1, 171; Throop, *Physica* (see note 7), 99.

Despite its ambiguity in light of Hildegard's cosmology, the "living source" is not explored further here, nor is there additional commentary on water as a cleansing agent.³⁵ At this point the critical edition by Hildebrandt and Gloning includes several sentences in the Florence and Wolfenbüttel manuscripts of the *Physica* that are taken verbatim from Book 1 of the *Cause*,³⁶ these comment on the mobility of water and the forces of warmth, moisture, and air, thus emphasizing the connections between the elements noted above in the *Cause*. The final sentence of the interpolation is, however, not found in this section of the *Cause*; it summarizes water's qualities and emphasizes the element's importance to all creation: "Et multas virtutes in se habet, atque homo cum aliis creaturis absque aqua nequaquam subsistere valeret."³⁷ The introductory statements are followed by three remedies – the first for a malady of the eye, the second for hard, hearty teeth, and the third for excessive bleeding during menstruation – all of which necessitate water as part of the cure. Each is described in detail, although only the first identifies the type of water needed: river or fresh water. However, in all three cases it is the coldness of the water that effects a cure: the coldness is said to thin the membrane of the eye and restrain the flow of blood; warm water is identified as a cause of fragile teeth, and thus cold water is preferred. The new edition concludes this first section on water with additional text, again from the *Cause*, that reiterates the connection between fire and water and introduces salt as the seed of fire and water.³⁸ This second interpolation, found only in some of the manuscripts, provides an introduction to a section on salt and its uses, which is included in Book I of the *Physica*.³⁹

In the subsequent section the focus is the sea, the flowing waters of which are the source of rivers.⁴⁰ Rivers are anthropomorphized: they extend forth from the

³⁵ James L. Smith provides a reference in Hildegard's visionary works to the power of water to cleanse the body and the soul in his essay in this volume.

³⁶ *Physica* (see note 7), Vol. 1, 171–72, II–2, 2–3 = *Cause*, 44, 23–45, 6, as noted in *Hildegard von Bingen. Physica. Liber subtilitatum diversarum naturarum creaturarum. Textkritische Ausgabe*, ed. Reiner Hildebrandt and Thomas Gloning, Vol. 2 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2010), 237.

³⁷ *Physica* (see note 7), Vol. 1, 172, II–2, 3.

³⁸ *Physica* (see note 7), Vol. 1, 172, II–2, 12–13 = *Cause*, 46, 8–14; see *Physica* (see note 35), Vol. 2, 238.

³⁹ The text in Book II is a slightly varied and expanded form of I–183, *Physica* (see note 7) Vol. 1, 154.

⁴⁰ Reiner Hildebrandt, "Die pragmatische Zweisprachigkeit in den naturkundlichen Schriften der Hildegard von Bingen," *Theodisca: Beiträge zur althochdeutschen und altniederdeutschen Sprache und Literatur in der Kultur des frühen Mittelalters. Eine internationale Fachtagung in Schönmühl bei Penzberg, vom 13. bis 16. März 1997*, ed. Wolfgang Haubrichs, Ernst Hellgardt,

sea to irrigate the earth, just as veins nourish the body with blood. The symbolism of the rivers as sources of nourishment continues as the vegetation alongside them is referenced – growing only in suitable earth.

Following are seven sections about German rivers: the Saar, Rhine, Main, Danube, Moselle, Nahe, and Glan.⁴¹ Each commentary begins with the river's origin, which is the sea in all cases except the Glan. Rivers that arise from an impetus of the sea (*de impetus maris*) – Saar, Rhine, and Danube – are harsh waters that are not potable. The sand and river bottom of the Saar is likened to a swamp; whereas the Rhine sand is light, and that of the Danube is beautiful. Although the Saar waters are commended for good skin because of their saltiness, they cause internal damage; the salinity of the Rhine and Danube is not mentioned, but both cause darkening of the skin and damage to internal organs.

In addition, the harsh Rhine waters can have both a positive and a negative effect: they combat harmful and mucusy humors (*noxios et lividos humores*), but if no such humors are found, they can worsen a person's health. Fish found in these three rivers are healthy and healthful to eat. In contrast, the Main and the Moselle are slower moving. Their waters are described in positive terms – rich (*pinguis*) and calm and clear (*lenis et lucida*) respectively – but their sand is muddy.

In the case of the Moselle this gives rise to fish that are not good to eat. However, the fish from the Main are healthful and its waters are salubrious for humans for various purposes: drinking, cooking, bathing, and washing. The nature of the Nahe is mutable, sometimes fast-flowing and at others more gentle; such movement of the water results in a shallow sand-bed. Arising from filthy waters (*de sordidis aquis*), it nonetheless causes no harm to humans and its fish last long and are good to eat. The Glan is identified as a tributary of other rivers and thus somewhat harsh. Like the Main, its waters are salutary for all purposes identified in these sections: cooking, drinking, bathing, and washing. Like the Saar, Rhine, and Danube, its sands are described in positive terms – which results in fish that are healthy, although not as hearty as those of the Main and the Nahe, due to the water's harshness.

The recent edition of the *Physica* concludes the section on the Glan with two brief sentences in which several rivers are compared with each other: the Saar

Reiner Hildebrandt, Stephan Müller, and Klaus Ridder (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2000), 276–89; here 288, identifies two remarkable points about the description of rivers in this work; the second is the following: “[Hildegards Beschreibung der Flüsse] wird noch absurder, wenn man liest – was aber wohl dem zeitgenössischen Weltbild entspricht –, daß für Hildegard die Flüsse aus dem Überlauf des Meeres entspringen; wohin sie fließen, bleibt dagegen völlig offen.”

⁴¹ *Physica* (see note 7), Vol. 1, 173–75; Throop, *Physica* (see note 7), 100–02.

with the Nahe, and a river whose name is unknown but is indicated by its location (*Fluvius in busendorf*).⁴²

Bingen is located where the Nahe empties into the Rhine. Some 35 kilometers to the southwest the Nahe branches off and the Glan begins, and approximately the same distance to the east the Main branches off as a tributary of the Rhine. Given these geographic circumstances, it could be assumed that Hildegard and many others in the communities of Rupertsberg and Eibingen would have been familiar with these rivers.⁴³ Such references would seem to provide the opportunity for her or someone in her communities to offer first-hand insights or personal experiences about the relationship between the physical environment and health, but this is not pursued.

Both the *Physica* and the *Cause* distinguish between water used for washing and bathing, and a section of the final book of the *Cause*, in which discussion of the elements reoccurs, revisits the topic. The elements of water and earth are presented as part of an analogy concerning the examination of urine and feces. The impact of air, specifically a strong wind on the river waters, is likened to the influence of an illness as a disturbance in urine.⁴⁴ Likewise, the odor of earth and clay before or after a rainstorm is compared to the smell of feces of a person who may be about to die.⁴⁵ These comparisons introduce two sections on various types of water that are recommended for bathing and bathing practices in general. Frequent bathing is only for those who are thin and dry (*macer et aridus*) since water provides warmth and of course moisture.⁴⁶ Any kind of water that is potable is also good for bathing; heating the water makes it more appropriate for the bath.

42 Hildebrandt, “Zweisprachigkeit” (see note 39), 287–88, notes that the “river in Busendorf” (*Fluvius in busendorf*), today Bouzonville, that is the Nied, is one of only two references to locales found in Hildegard’s works.

43 Hildebrandt’s comments in “Zweisprachigkeit” (see note 39) regarding the German rivers are somewhat puzzling; he asserts: “An Hildegards Beschreibung der Flüsse ist zweierlei auffällig: Erstens benennt sie von allen deutschen Flüssen nur den Rhein, den Main, die Donau und die Mosel, die für sie offenbar zur äußeren Peripherie ihres geographischen Horizontes gehören, und zum engeren Umkreis ihres Heimatgebietes behandelt sie sodann die Nahe und den Glan; bei letzterem fügt sie als Anhängsel gerade noch den zitierten Satz über die Saar und den Fluss in Busendorf an. Die Geographie ist demnach durchaus nicht Hildegards starke Seite gewesen,” 288. Although it might be understandable that the *magistra* lacked familiarity with the Danube and the Moselle, this can hardly be said of the Rhine – or perhaps even the Main. Moreover, even if she does not refer to the Elbe, for instance, she has already included most of the important rivers and seems to be much more aware of geographic dimensions than assumed.

44 *Cause* (see note 8), 278–79; *Holistic Healing* (see note 8), 204.

45 *Cause* (see note 8), 279; *Holistic Healing* (see note 8), 205.

46 *Cause* (see note 8), 281; *Holistic Healing* (see note 8), 205–06.

Neither water from rain nor snow is good for bathing, the latter not even when heated. Water protected in a cistern and waters of a flowing stream are somewhat preferable, but the strongest recommendation is for rivers and streams that come forth from the inextinguishable fires in the air (*inextinguibiles ignes in aere*), which are punishment from God for human misdeeds. Despite their malevolent origins, these waters bring health. The text describes how these waters are guided: “Sed et homines interdum arte sua ad eadem loca aliquando quosdam riuulos ducebant, ut ex eis calefierent, qui per eadem loca fluentes et ardorem ibi accipientes deinde calidi effluebant.”⁴⁷ The discussion of bathing concludes with the steam bath (*assum balneum, scilicet ignites lapidibus calefactum*). Here the opposite advice to that found in the previous section is given. In order to avoid additional dryness, thin people should not engage in this practice.

Surprisingly, although the previous section instructs that warm baths should be avoided by fat people since they already are warm enough, here the additional heat serves to reduce overabundant humors. The same argument recommends such baths to those who suffer from gout. At the beginning of Book 4 of the *Cause* steam baths, along with plants known for their properties of heat, also are recommended as a remedy for women who fail to menstruate⁴⁸; it is twice noted in this remedy that water from a flowing river rather than a living spring should be used, both for the bath and the cooking of the plants. Two reasons are provided: such water flows freely but also has been in contact with other elements, which presumably increases its potency.

The *Physica* and the *Cause* catalog the same remedies involving water, namely those for weakened eyesight, hard teeth, and heavy menstruation. The *Physica* also includes several incantations that involve the use of water in conjunction with a plant or tree.⁴⁹ Of note here as well is an incantation found in the third book of Hildegard’s *Vita*, titled *De miraculis* and prepared after her death⁵⁰; it contains the sole cure in which the waters of a specific river are identified. Using Christ’s words (John 9:7), Hildegard purportedly commanded: “Vade ad natatoria

⁴⁷ *Cause* (see note 8), 282; “Clever people sometimes dig small channels from the places through which these streams flow, absorb its heat, and then let it flow on, using the hot water to warm themselves,” *Holistic Healing* (see note 8), 207.

⁴⁸ *Cause* (see note 8), 231; *Holistic Healing* (see note 8), 165.

⁴⁹ Debra L. Stoudt, “The Medical, the Magical, and the Miraculous in the Healing Arts of Hildegard of Bingen,” *A Companion to Hildegard of Bingen*, ed. Beverly Mayne Kienzle, Debra L. Stoudt, and George Ferzoco. Brill’s Companions to the Christian Tradition, 45 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2014), 265–67.

⁵⁰ Peter Bernards, “Die rheinische Mirakelliteratur im 12. Jahrhundert,” *Annalen des historischen Vereins für den Niederrhein* 138 (1941): 22–24.

Syloe et laua" (Go to the pool of Siloe, and wash). She then blessed the water of the Rhine and sprinkled it on the eyes of a blind boy to heal them.⁵¹ Medieval *Wassersegen* (water charms) frequently reference Siloam (the Pool of Siloam in Jerusalem) or the river Jordan.⁵² In the German-speaking regions there are examples of the replacement or comparison of the Jordan with the Danube in benedictions (*Segensprüche*) in order to localize the blessing⁵³; here is such an occurrence with the Rhine, hardly surprising given the location of Bingen at the confluence of the Germany's best-known river and the Nahe.

Various influences and possible sources for the *Physica* and the *Cause* have been identified⁵⁴; however, as Ortrun Riha notes:

[B]is heute hat man keine Vorlage gefunden, die die tief gehenden Abweichungen vom medizinischen "Mainstream" erklären könnte. Die vielen bei Moulinier ausgeworfenen Literaturstellen sind insofern irreführend: Sie zeugen zwar von enormer Belesenheit der Herausgeberin, bieten aber lediglich Ähnlichkeiten in Formulierung, Gegenstand oder Anspielungen; "Quellen" – im eigentlichen Sinn sind es nicht.⁵⁵

[Until today no source has been found which could explain the extensive deviations from the medical "mainstream." The many passages in various texts produced by Moulinier are hence misleading. They demonstrate the editor's enormous knowledge of primary litera-

⁵¹ *Vita Sanctae Hildegardis*, ed. Monika Klaes. Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio Mediaeualis, 1, 26 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1993), 55.

⁵² Oskar Ebermann, *Blut- und Wundsegen in ihrer Entwicklung*. Palaestra. Untersuchungen und Texte aus der deutschen und englischen Philologie, XXIV (Berlin: Mayer & Müller, 1903), 34–35.

⁵³ Ebermann, *Blut- und Wundsegen* (see note 51), 34 and 139.

⁵⁴ See, for example, Reiner Hildebrandt, "Summarium Heinrici, das Lehrbuch der Hildegard von Bingen," *Stand und Aufgaben der deutschen Dialektlexikographie, II. Brüder-Grimm-Symposium zur Historischen Wortforschung. Beiträge zu der Marburger Tagung vom Oktober 1992*, ed. Ernst Bremer and Reiner Hildebrandt (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1996), 89–110; Laurence Moulinier, "Ein Präzedenzfall der Kompendienliteratur. Die Quellen der natur- und heilkundlichen Schriften Hildegards von Bingen," *Hildegard von Bingen: Prophetin durch die Zeiten. Zum 900. Geburtstag*, ed. Edeltraut Forster (Freiburg i. Br.: Herder, 1997), 431–47; Moulinier, "Hildegarde ou Pseudo-Hildegard? Réflexions sur l'authenticité du 'Cause et cure,'" "Im Angesicht Gottes sucht der Mensch sich selbst." *Hildegard von Bingen 1098–1179*, ed. Rainer Berndt. *Erudiri sapientia*, 2 (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2001), 115–46; *Cause*, LXIII–CI; Irmgard Müller, "Zur Verfasserfrage der medizinisch-naturkundlichen Schriften Hildegards von Bingen," *Tiefe des Gotteswissens – Schönheit der Sprachgestalt bei Hildegard von Bingen: Internationales Symposium in der Katholischen Akademie Rabanus Maurus, Wiesbaden-Naurod, vom 9. bis 12. September 1994*, ed. Margot Schmidt. *Mystik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, 10 (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 1995), 1–17.

⁵⁵ Ortrun Riha, "Reißende Flüsse, schäumende Töpfe. Die Bedeutung der Bilder in Hildegards von Bingen *Causae et curae*," *Concilium medii aevi* 14 (2011): 223–37; here 226, footnote 20.

ture, but they demonstrate only similarities in formulation, object, or allusion; they are not “sources” in the proper sense of the word.]

Moulinier references several ideas concerning water in the *Cosmographia* of Aethicus Ister and the *Secretum secretorum* of Pseudo-Aristotle that find resonance in the *Cause*.⁵⁶ Book 5 of the *Summarium Heinrici*, a compendium championed by Hildebrandt as a primary source of Hildegard’s works, includes a description that focuses on water terminology and provides the names of rivers on three continents⁵⁷; it offers specifics not included in the *Cause*, and its list of German river names varies greatly from that found in the *Cause*.⁵⁸

In a letter to a fellow monk, Guibert of Gembloux, Hildegard’s last amanuensis who lived at Rupertsberg from 1177 to 1180, she remarks on the technology found there: “commodious and dignified buildings most suitable for a religious community, with running water distributed through all the workshops” that were “designed for the writing of books, the weaving of robes or other manual crafts.”⁵⁹ Magnusson notes the introduction of new hydraulic systems in the early eleventh century and their subsequent proliferation, identifying eleven religious houses in Germany that employed such a system in the eleventh and twelfth centuries.⁶⁰ However, Rupertsberg is not among them. Magnusson further notes that

prevailing religious attitudes facilitated monastic access to natural and financial resources. Laymen donated springs, rights-of-way, and sometimes money for monastic conduits as expressions of piety and in the expectation of spiritual rewards. More intangibly, the new “optimistic rationalism” that emerged in the theology of the twelfth century created a religious atmosphere favoring technological undertakings. Although water retained its earlier sacramental symbolism and holy associations, it was also seen as an element in a natural world that was (at least potentially) intelligible and predictable. God’s ordered creation

⁵⁶ *Cause*, LXV.

⁵⁷ *Summarium Heinrici*, Vol. 1, ed. Reiner Hildebrandt. *Quellen und Forschungen zur Sprach- und Kulturgeschichte der germanischen Völker*, NF 61 (185) (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1974), 215–20.

⁵⁸ The *Summarium Heinrici* mentions the following rivers in the Germanic territories at that time and tributaries of such rivers: Danube, Elbe, Enz, Lech, Maas, Main, Moselle, Nahe, Neckar, Rhine, and Rhône.

⁵⁹ *Jutta and Hildegard: The Biographical Sources*, trans. and intro. Anna Silvas. Brepols Medieval Women Series (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), 101.

⁶⁰ Magnusson, *Water Technology* (see note 16), 5 and 6. The houses are: Bamberg, Ensdorf, Erfurt, Essen, Goseck, Goslar, Großkomburg, Harzburg, Hirsau, Magdeburg, and Prüfening. The closest to Bingen is Ensdorf in the Saarland.

could be understood and mastered by man, and man's own creative activities took on religious significance through their relationship to God's work.⁶¹

From extant records it appears that the Benedictines had the largest number of systems and male religious communities were more likely to have such systems than their female counterparts. Magnusson assumes women would have had fewer financial resources and greater difficulty acquiring land beyond their initial endowments – and thus were less likely to engage in ambitious drainage and land reclamation projects. In addition, they could not count on the support of the male religious.⁶² All of these reasons apply to Hildegard's situation with the founding of the community at Rupertsberg, and given the expense as well as the frequently contentious relationship between the *magistra* and Kuno, abbot of the Disibodenberg community, it is all the more remarkable that this innovation should be found in one of Hildegard's communities. The relocation of the nuns to the new community was sanctioned by Kuno only after considerable wrangling on Hildegard's part; the building of the new community was a long and arduous process and there was considerable financial strain.

Unfortunately, no further corroboration or elaboration of Guibert's remark has been found. Although Hildegard herself frequently comments on the cosmic significance of water as well as its importance in the natural world, the *magistra* offers little commentary on its day-to-day use in the community – or on fountains, fonts, and other water sources at Rupertsberg.⁶³ Given the time, effort, and cost that implementing a system of running water would have entailed, one can assume that its availability was of paramount importance to Hildegard and that she took great pride in the accomplishment – which makes her silence on the topic all the more puzzling.

⁶¹ Magnusson, *Water Technology* (see note 16), 7.

⁶² Magnusson, *Water Technology* (see note 16), 14.

⁶³ Hildegard's third and final visionary work, the *Liber divinorum operum*, Book III, Vision 3, includes several references to God or the Spirit of God as the living fountain: *Hildegard of Bingen: Book of Divine Works*, trans. Priscilla Throop (Charlotte, VT: MedievalMS, 2009), 210–11.

Water, Cleanliness, and Hygiene in the Late Middle Ages

In subsequent centuries the focus shifts to the exploration of different types of prepared waters.⁶⁴ Distillations, including alcoholic distillates, take on a significant role in the late thirteenth century. In the German-speaking countries these waters are known by various names, including the Latin *aqua ardens* or *aqua vitae* and the vernacular *gebrannte* or *ausgebrannte Wässer*.

Despite the inability to articulate specific reasons or causes, the population of medieval Europe understood the dangers inherent in polluted waters and the necessity to distinguish among water sources for various purposes.⁶⁵ Maintaining the flow and the purity of river water gained in importance and was regulated beginning in 1296.⁶⁶ Fountains took on the primary function in providing water for drinking and domestic use.⁶⁷

During the high and late Middle Ages there was renewed interest in natural waters for health-giving purposes.⁶⁸ The value of bathing increased, perhaps due to contact with the Eastern world but also due to the recognition of its usefulness in promoting better skin and general cleanliness.⁶⁹ Bath sites from Roman times were re-established and new ones discovered. Some of the oldest in the German-speaking areas, such as Wiesbaden, may well have been put to use again as early as the seventh or eighth century, and Charlemagne is said to have visited the baths at Pyrmont.

64 An overview of such treatises can be found in Ria Jansen-Sieben, “Medizinwässer,” *Die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters. Verfasserlexikon*, completely rev. 2nd ed. Kurt Ruh (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1987), Vol. 6, 291–93, with a more recent synopsis by Francis B. Brévant, “Between Medicine, Magic, and Religion: Wonder Drugs in German Medico-Pharmaceutical Treatises of the Thirteenth to the Sixteenth Centuries,” *Speculum* 83 (2008): 1–57; here 18–25. Among the German treatises from the mid-fourteenth to early sixteenth century are those by Gabriel von Lebenstein, Michael Puff (Michael Schrick), and Hieronymus Brunschwig.

65 Magnusson, *Water Technology* (see note 16), 27.

66 Paul Trio, “The Challenge for a Medieval Center of Industrial Growth: Ypres and the Drinking-Water Problem,” *The Nature and Function of Water* (see note 2), 400.

67 Magnusson, *Water Technology* (see note 16), 134.

68 See, for example, Alfred Martin, *Deutsches Badewesen in vergangenen Tagen* (1906; Munich: Diederichs, 1989); and Birgit Tuchen, *Öffentliche Badhäuser in Deutschland und der Schweiz im Mittelalter und der frühen Neuzeit* (Petersberg: Imhof, 2003).

69 Regarding bathing, see the contributions to this volume by Albrecht Classen and Thomas G. Benedek. As to the history of spas, i.e., mineral and thermal baths, especially in Bohemia, see the contribution to this volume by David Tomíček.

Numerous bathing locales remained popular locally for centuries, gaining in notoriety only in the later Middle Ages as the nobility began to demonstrate interest and as tales of miraculous healing spread. Known already in the tenth century, the *Warmbad* (warm bath) first grew in importance after a visit in 1370 by Emperor Charles IV, for whom they were later renamed (Karlsbader Sprudel/ Karlovy Vary/ Karlsbad Springs). Already in the thirteenth century a poem attributed to the poet Neidhart referenced bathing in the waters at Gastein, today in the state of Salzburg in Austria⁷⁰; in subsequent centuries the venue attracted visits from Emperor Frederick III and Paracelsus (Theophrastus Bombastus Paracelsus, born Philip von Hohenheim, 1493–1541). The fifteenth century also saw the rise in *Wildbäder*, with either mineral or hot springs, which became particularly popular among the upper classes.⁷¹ No fewer than a dozen physicians and scientists, including Paracelsus and Agricola, wrote about one such hot spring, Wildbad (today Bad Wildbad) near Karlsruhe in Germany.⁷² The writings of these two men exemplify the descriptions of water that became popular in the early modern era.

Several works by Paracelsus include references to the elements reminiscent of ideas in the medical-scientific writings associated with Hildegard. In the *Opus Paramirum* Paracelsus notes the primacy of water at the time of creation: “Da nun also die welt nichts war sondern ein wasser und der geist des herren war auf dem wasser, so ward das wasser zu der welt. Das ist nun die matrix der welt und in im weiter alle geschoepf.”⁷³ In *Philosophia de generationibus et fructibus quatuor elementorum* he divides the elements into two groups, as in the *Cause*:

70 Wolfgang Eckart, *Geschichte der Medizin*, 4th ed. (Berlin, Heidelberg, and New York: Springer, 2001), 115, comments on “Die Graserin in der Gastein,” attributed to the thirteenth-century poet Neidhart. See also the contribution to this volume by Thomas G. Benedek.

71 Birgit Studt, “Baden zwischen Lust und Therapie. Das Interesse von Frauen an Bädern und Badereisen in Mittelalter und Früher Neuzeit,” “*Ohne Wasser ist kein Heil.* *Medizinische und kulturelle Aspekte der Nutzung von Wasser*,” ed. Sylvelyn Hähner-Rombach. *Medizin, Gesellschaft und Geschichte*, 25 (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2005), 101–04, provides a useful overview.

72 The works are listed in Wilhelm Theodor Renz, *Historische Briefe über das Wildbad*. Vol. I: *Wildbad. Name, Ursprung und Eintritt in die Geschichte* (Stuttgart: J. G. Cotta, 1871), IX–XIII.

73 Paracelsus, *Opus Paramirum*, *Theophrast von Hohenheim gen. Paracelsus: Sämtliche Werke*, ed. Karl Sudhoff, Vol. 9 (Munich: Barth, 1925), 191. The 14-volume Sudhoff edition is available in digitized form through the Universitätsbibliothek Braunschweig. *Paracelsus. Selected Writings*, ed. Jolande Jacobi, trans. Norbert Guterman. Bollingen Series, 28 (1951; New York, NY: Pantheon Books, 1958), 13: “When the world was still nothing but water, and the Spirit of the Lord moved upon the face of the waters, the world emerged from the water; water was the matrix of the world and of all its creatures.”

Zwo narung seind hie, eine im luft und im feur, die ander in der erden und im wasser. die obern zwei nerent uns als geistlich, unsichtbarlich, die undern materialisch und corporalisch. dise vier element ... seind also beschaffen, das ie eins das ander hebt, braucht und nert.

[These nutriment are twofold, one found in air and fire, the other in earth and water. The two former nourish us as if spiritually and invisibly; the two latter materially and corporeally. These four elements ... were created in due order, that the one might support, seek for, and nourish the other.]⁷⁴

However, in subsequent sections of the work more modern views become apparent:

Wie aber nun got beschaffen hat die welt, ist also. er hats in ein corpus gemacht, anfenglich, so weit die vier element gênt. dises corpus hat er gesezt in drei stück, in mercurium, sulphur und sal, also das do seind drei ding, machen éin corpus; dise drei ding machen alles, so in den vier elementen ist und wird.

[The world is as God created it. In the beginning He made it into a body, which consists of four elements. He founded this primordial body on the trinity of mercury, sulphur, and salt, and these are the three substances of which the complete body consists. For they form everything that lies in the four elements.]⁷⁵

With *Von den natürlichen bedern*, written perhaps in 1525, the science of balneotherapy is said to have been founded.⁷⁶ In 1535 Paracelsus penned a brief commentary on the waters at Pfäfers (Pfeffers) in the Tamina gorge in northeastern Switzerland (near Bad Ragatz, south of Vaduz), in which he describes the acratothermal waters, i.e., those with a low mineral content.⁷⁷ This work, as well as *Von den natürlichen Wassern* and *Bruchstücke über Thermalwässer*, reflects the

⁷⁴ Paracelsus, *Philosophia de generationibus et fructibus quatuor elementorum*, *Theophrast von Hohenheim gen. Paracelsus: Sämtliche Werke*, ed. Karl Sudhoff, Vol. 13 (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1931), 11; Paracelsus the Great, “The Philosophy of Theophrastus Concerning the Generations of the Elements,” *The Hermetic and Alchemical Writings*, trans. and ed. Arthur Waite, Vol. I (1894; New Hyde Park, NY: University Books, 1967), 203.

⁷⁵ Paracelsus, *Philosophia* (see note 74), 12-13; Paracelsus. *Selected Writings* (see note 73), 14.

⁷⁶ Walter Schindler, “Das Badebüchlein des Paracelsus,” *Archiv für physikalische Therapie* 12 (1960): 1-13. See also the contribution to this volume by Thomas G. Benedek.

⁷⁷ Paracelsus, *Von des Bades Pfäfers Tugenden, Kräften und Wirkung, Ursprung und Herkommen, Regiment und Ordnung*, *Theophrast von Hohenheim gen. Paracelsus: Sämtliche Werke*, ed. Karl Sudhoff, Vol. 9 (Munich: Barth, 1925), 639-59. See also Werner Heinz, “Balneologisches Wissen zwischen Antike und früher Neuzeit,” *Religion und Gesundheit. Der heilkundliche Diskurs im 16. Jahrhundert*, ed. Albrecht Classen. *Theophrastus Paracelsus Studien*, 3 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2011), 303-22; especially 311-13.

interest in the chemical specifics of waters, in particular the mineral properties that had come to light in the previous century.

Georgius Agricola

A key impetus for this development was intense mining activity at the time, especially in the Ore Mountains (Erzgebirge). This engagement led to the scientific study of minerals and rocks, and Georgius Agricola (Georg Pauer; 1494–1555) is considered its founder. His description of waters, *De natura eorum, quae effluunt ex terra* (Concerning the Nature of Substances that Flow from the Earth, 1545), is informed by his interest and expertise and serves as an example of this new perspective.⁷⁸

Herbert Clark and Lou Henry Hoover provide a terse and uncomplimentary summary of *De natura* in the Appendix to their English translation of Agricola's much better-known *De Re Metallica*:

This work of four books, comprising 83 folio pages, first appears in the 1546 collection. As the title indicates, the discussion is upon the substances which flow from the earth, such as water, bitumen, gases, etc. Altogether it is of microscopic value and wholly uninteresting. The major part refers to colour, taste, temperature, medicinal uses of water, descriptions of rivers, lakes, swamps, and aqueducts.⁷⁹

The final sentence resonates to some degree with the descriptions of water in Hildegard's works, but *De natura* differs on substantial points, as will be noted below.

In the preface to *De natura* Agricola identifies by name 64 Greek and Latin writers whose works he cites.⁸⁰ Included are individuals with a medical or sci-

78 The work has not been translated into English. It is most readily available in the German translation by Georg Fraustadt with Hans Prescher: *De natura eorum quae effluunt ex terra libri IV, Georgius Agricola. Schriften zur Geologie und Mineralogie I* (Berlin: VEB Deutscher Verlag der Wissenschaften, 1956), 213–328, used here and cited as *De natura*. Additional commentary about water is found in Agricola's *De ortu et causis subterraneorum* (Concerning the Source and Causes of Underground Materials, 544), included in the volume above, 45–187. Isabel F. Barton provides a summary of its contents and an evaluation of Agricola's influence on early hydrological science in “Georgius Agricola's Contributions to Hydrology”, *Journal of Hydrology* 523 (2015): 839–49.

79 *Georgius Agricola. De Re Metallica*, trans. Herbert Clark Hoover and Lou Henry Hoover (1912; New York: Dover, 1950), 398.

80 *De natura* (see note 78), 215–16. The reference to “the holy writings of the Hebrews” (“die Heiligen Schriften der Hebräer”) seems out of place in this list but is explained in the dedicatory

tific background, e.g., Aristotle, Pliny the Elder, Dioscorides, and Galen, as well as others such as Virgil, Ovid, and Tacitus, who at first glance would seem less obvious sources of knowledge on the subject of this book.⁸¹ No medieval thinkers and scientists are included, which suggests a close reliance on and connection to the scholarly traditions of antiquity. This is not surprising, given Agricola's participation with other Humanists in 1525 in the preparation of editions of the works of Galen and Hippocrates⁸²; until the end of his life Agricola retained his belief in the validity of the theories of these classical authorities.⁸³

The preface is followed by a dedicatory letter to Moritz, Duke of Sachsen and Prince of Thuringia and Meißen, which begins by identifying the classical origin of Agricola's scientific investigation, itself rooted in the theory of the four elements and their indispensability to all creation:

Es ist eine alte Theorie, erlauchter Fürst, und sie ist von den wissenschaftlich so bedeutenden Griechen und anderen Völkern, die sich der Naturforschung gewidmet haben, sorgfältig entwickelt worden, daß alles, was unterhalb der Sphäre des Mondes erzeugt wird, aus vier Elementen besteht, und daß alle Gewächse und Lebewesen mittels ihrer wachsen und sich am Leben halten.

[Illustrious Prince, it is an old theory that was carefully developed by the scientifically renowned Greeks and other peoples who have dedicated themselves to the natural sciences, that everything created under the sphere of the moon consists of four elements and that all plants and living beings grow and remain alive because of them.]⁸⁴

Although the author notes the importance of all four elements, he soon reveals the central role of water along with the purpose of this work, namely to distinguish between healthy and unhealthy waters:

letter, where "other peoples" are mentioned. An index by Georg Fraustadt for this list of names as well as that found in the preface of *De natura fossilium* is included in *Georgius Agricola, De natura fossilium libri X. Die Mineralien*, trans. and ed. Georg Fraustadt with Hans Prescher. *Georgius Agricola—Ausgewählte Werke*, IV (Berlin: VEB Deutscher Verlag der Wissenschaften, 1958), 345–95.

81 Agricola's reliance on Aristotelian ideas with regard to geology is noted by Martin Guntau and Gerhard Mathe, "Georgius Agricolas Beiträge zur Entwicklung geologischer Vorstellungen," *Georgius Agricola, 500 Jahre: Wissenschaftliche Konferenz vom 25.–27. März 1994 in Chemnitz, Freistaat Sachsen*, ed. Friedrich Naumann (Basel: Birkhäuser Verlag, 1994), 90–104; here 95.

82 Rolf Winau, "Georgius Agricola und die Medizin seiner Zeit," *Georgius Agricola: 500 Jahre* (see note 81), 497–507; here 500.

83 Winau, "Georgius Agricola und die Medizin seiner Zeit" (see note 81), 499. In his discussion Winau contrasts Agricola's stance to that of Paracelsus.

84 *De natura* (see note 78), 217.

Da aber die Erde sowohl Wasser – das Meerwasser und Regenwasser ausgenommen – ausströmen lässt als auch Ausdunstungen ausdampft, aus denen Regenwasser entsteht und Luft erzeugt wird, die auch deren Einwirkungen unterliegt, haben es alle Menschen nötig, die Natur der Stoffe zu untersuchen, die aus der Erde fließen und die sie ausdampft, damit sie ebenso von den Wässern wie von den Orten die heilsamen aussuchen und die ungesunden meiden können.

[But since the earth not only permits water – except for sea water and rainwater – to flow out but also evaporates vapors from which rainwater is created and air, which is subject to the vapors' influence, is produced, it is necessary for people to study the nature of the substances that flow from the earth and that the earth evaporates, so that they can seek out the salutary waters and places and avoid the unhealthy ones.]⁸⁵

Agricola explains that he has not been able to consult the writings of all of the individuals above directly; however, he identifies specific ideas and theories with a certain person or work in several cases. He claims that not only has he literally followed in the footsteps of the writers of antiquity by traveling to various locations and repeating the observations carried out in the past, he also has brought his own experiences to bear on the undertaking by introducing new observations of his own.⁸⁶ As a result, he is able to present a greater number of examples, which reflects the scientific expectations of his day and underscores the contribution of the modern age – in particular of Germany – to the recognized corpus of knowledge.⁸⁷

Agricola notes that he has selected for his study springs, rivers, and seas that the classical authors have described in particular detail with regard to color, taste, smell, or other notable characteristic, or that he himself has seen.⁸⁸ He describes again his modern approach to his subject:

Wie es aber sehr unbillig ist, den Schriften der Alten deswegen die Glaubwürdigkeit abzusprechen, weil einiges sich an solchen Erscheinungen geändert hat (das bringt die Natur nämlich mit sich), so wird es ungerecht sein, uns nicht Glauben zu schenken, wenn in künftigen Jahren eine Änderung mancher Erscheinungen eintritt.

⁸⁵ *De natura* (see note 78), 217.

⁸⁶ *De natura* (see note 78), 218.

⁸⁷ *De natura* (see note 78), 218–19: “Denn unwürdig erschien es mir, daß Tatsachen aus anderen Gegenden den Glanz ihrer Bedeutung behalten, die aus Deutschland dagegen, in dichtes Dunkel gehüllt, verborgen bleiben sollten, wo sie doch nicht weniger als die anderen der Erinnerung und des Glanzes wert sind.” In the annotation to this line on p. 225, Fraustadt and Pescher note: “Hier kommt der nationale Zug in der neuen humanistischen Wissenschaft deutlich zum Ausdruck.” (“Here the national strain in the new Humanistic science is clearly expressed”).

⁸⁸ *De natura* (see note 78), 219.

[Just as it is very unfair to deny the credibility of the writings of antiquity because some things regarding their observations have changed (which happens in the natural world), it would be unjust not to believe, if in the future a change in many an observation occurs.]⁸⁹

Agricola proceeds to describe the contents of the four books that constitute the work, after which he directs his attention to the duke and concludes with content more typical of a dedication.

De natura consists of four books; only the first three deal with water.⁹⁰ In Book I the color, taste, smell, warmth, denseness, and heaviness of various bodies of water in the known world are described; Book II is devoted to the efficacy of waters; and Book III addresses differences among the waters. Rivers and other bodies of water as far away as Africa and Asia are referenced along with those in the German-speaking territories; sometimes they are identified by name and sometimes by their approximate geographic location.

Book I begins with the description of three types of water: “simple” (*einfach*), which is “kalt, rein, hat eine ihm eigentümliche Färbung, ist durchsichtig, ohne Geschmack und doch angenehm zu genießen, geruchlos, dünn, leicht”⁹¹; “mixed” (*gemischt*), characterized simply as those without the aforementioned characteristics; and “not simple” (*nicht einfach*), namely water that is comingled with other elements such as fire, earth, stone, and minerals. Agricola offers considerable detail as to the influence of these foreign substances on the nature of the waters themselves as well as the fish in them. The discussion proceeds to a description of the color of waters, with fine distinctions made, sometimes including the agent responsible: the golden yellow from ochre found in a river in Saxony near Goslar, the reddish yellow of the Main, the blood red of water in proximity to the sea near the city of Joppe (Jaffa) in Palestine.⁹² However, temperature and season can cause the color to change, and living things such as trees and flowers can lend their hue to waters as well.

Sweet waters can refer to those that are simply generally pleasant to drink as well as waters with a special sweetness. Some of the latter are warm waters that taste of milk or wine.⁹³ Other warm waters, such as those near Braunschweig

⁸⁹ *De natura* (see note 78), 219.

⁹⁰ Book IV describes subterranean air and vapors (*Dämpfe*) and includes an extensive discussion of earthquakes. It will not be examined in detail here, although of note is the section on waters that appear to be on fire (317–18), which references several baths mentioned above.

⁹¹ *De natura* (see note 78), 226–27; “cold, pure, has its own unique coloring, is clear, without taste but pleasant to drink, odorless, thin, and light.”

⁹² *De natura* (see note 78), 229.

⁹³ *De natura* (see note 78), 232.

(Brunswick) (north Germany) and Tegernsee (south Germany), shine as if covered with oil as a result of bitumen; some such waters in other parts of the world, especially Asia Minor, are so greasy that it is as though the people bathing or washing in them had been rubbed with oil.⁹⁴ Salty waters are most abundant in Germany, which accounts for the numerous cities with names such as Hall, Halle, and Salza.⁹⁵ Although no bitter waters – the result of saltpeter – in the German territories are mentioned, there are “sour wells” (*Sauerbrunnen*) near Göppingen in the vicinity of Calw.⁹⁶

Simple water has no odor, but mixed waters seldom smell good. Near Hildesheim (near Braunschweig) are two springs, one of which smells of rotten eggs, although the taste is pleasant; when drunk on an empty stomach, it causes belching⁹⁷; the other is sulfurized and has the unpleasant smell of burnt gun power.⁹⁸ Despite their odor, such waters are not characterized as having harmful effects.

A description of the temperature of waters serves as an introduction to the warm waters of Karlsbad, Baden, and Wiesbaden, which boast remarkable heat: “Denn deren Wasser kocht nicht nur Eier, sondern nimmt von der Haut der Vögel die Federn, von der Schweinehaut die Borsten, mag man die Tiere eintauchen oder sie damit übergießen.”⁹⁹ Relatively brief descriptions of density and heaviness follow, and the book concludes with additional detailed commentary regarding the composition of the mixed waters and the scientific method by which the waters can be identified: the tongue perceives certain types of water, while the eye recognizes even more.¹⁰⁰ Mineral content is afforded particular attention, with the discussion of waters containing, salt, saltpeter, potassium, vitriol, sulfur, bitumen, copper, and chrysocolla. Agricola begins Book II by addressing the dangers of water mixed with steam to fish and other living things.¹⁰¹ Bitter waters, namely those that have experienced fire, are useful to regulate urination, treat gall- and kidney stones, and deal with intoxication.¹⁰² In the subsequent

⁹⁴ *De natura* (see note 78), 233.

⁹⁵ *De natura* (see note 78), 234.

⁹⁶ *De natura* (see note 78), 236.

⁹⁷ *De natura* (see note 78), 237.

⁹⁸ *De natura* (see note 78), 238.

⁹⁹ *De natura* (see note 78), 239. “Their water not only boils eggs, it also takes the feathers from the skin of birds and the bristles from the pig’s skin, if one were inclined to immerse the animals or pour the water over them.”

¹⁰⁰ *De natura* (see note 78), 241–48.

¹⁰¹ *De natura* (see note 78), 249.

¹⁰² *De natura* (see note 78), 249.

sections first the salutary properties of water mixed with various minerals are catalogued, followed by water that comes into contact with specific metals.¹⁰³

Agricola provides an extensive inventory of waters that are identified by classical authors as curatives but distances himself from the reliability of some of the remedies.¹⁰⁴ The list begins with waters containing potassium (*Alaun*), useful for the treatment of wounds and abscesses, and waters with copper (and some with potassium) that cure eye ailments as well as wounds; it becomes more varied in terms of types of waters and of ailments as it progresses, with a focus on the chemical properties of the water. Since Agricola had been a practicing physician for several years, it might be expected that the inventory would include cures with which he had personal experience, but such is not the case.¹⁰⁵ Following is an extensive list of waters considered to be harmful and even deadly to the fish that swim in them as well as animals and humans who drink from them.¹⁰⁶ Comments regarding waters that nourish fish and animals lead to the concluding sections, in which Agricola describes remarkable effects of water that have been reported by his sources, e.g., waters in which nothing will sink, and some he characterizes as unbelievable, e.g., waters that cause those who drink them to laugh themselves to death.¹⁰⁷

Book III provides commentary on the differences among the types of waters. These are distinguished based upon their source:

[E]jinige von ihnen fließen von selbst aus der Erde, so die Quellwässer. Andere werden aus ihr geschöpft, so die Brunnenwässer. Andere fallen aus der Luft herab, wie die Regenwässer. Andere verharren an ihrem naturgewiesenen Ort, so die Meerwässer.

[[S]ome of them flow on their own out of the earth, such as the spring waters. Others are drawn from the earth, the well waters. Others fall from the air, like the rain waters. Others remain in the place intended by nature, the sea waters.]¹⁰⁸

Each of the first three is described particularly with regard to outflow (*Ausfließen*) and the other, often smaller waterways created from this movement.¹⁰⁹

103 *De natura* (see note 78), 251–53.

104 *De natura* (see note 78), 256–59.

105 It may be that such information was included in other writings by Agricola that are no longer extant, for example *De fontibus medicatis*, mentioned in Book IV of *De natura* (see note 78), 318.

106 *De natura* (see note 78), 256–64.

107 *De natura* (see note 78), 264–68.

108 *De natura* (see note 78), 269.

109 *De natura* (see note 78), 270.

A comparable depiction of rivers, including some oceans and seas, follows (276–78). Surprising is the relatively brief but informative section on the building of trenches, aqueducts, and water pipes for the transport of the water into cities. Agricola includes recommendations regarding materials: “Herstellung der Gräben aus Felsgestein ist nützlich einmal für die Dauer des Werks und dann für die Reinheit des Wassers.”¹¹⁰ He notes the use of metal pipes as well – lead is customary, but copper has been introduced – and provides details on how the various types of pipes are constructed.

Following this excursus, he returns to discuss rainwaters, the final of the four categories identified at the beginning of the book, as well as seas and swamps. Agricola then turns his attention to the potential salutary as well as harmful effects of the various types of water, especially with regard to the temperature of waters at certain times of the day and seasons of the year.¹¹¹ Following is a commentary on the salubriousness of each type of water discussed above, which repeats to some extent information found earlier in the book as well as in Books I and II. This final section is punctuated with another brief description of piped water, which notes the potential health impact of the various types of pipes: those made of hard rock (*Felsgestein*), clay, and wood preserve the purity of the water, whereas metal pipes, especially those of copper, are harmful.¹¹² The book concludes by identifying specific illnesses or conditions caused by harmful waters and providing advice on purifying foul waters.¹¹³

Conclusion

Despite the four hundred years between the compilation of Hildegard’s *Physica* and *Cause et cure* and Agricola’s *De natura*, there are notable similarities as well as striking differences in the representation of water. The fundamental reliance on earlier authorities regarding theories about the natural world continues through the Middle Ages and into the early modern era. Hildegard’s writings incorporate knowledge from antiquity without comment or attribution, as was the practice at the time; contemporaneous concepts as well as those unique to the *magistra* frequently complement or develop these commonly held ideas. In contrast, Agricola

¹¹⁰ *De natura* (see note 78), 280: “The fabrication of trenches out of hard rock is useful in terms of the durability of the system and also regarding the purity of the water.”

¹¹¹ *De natura* (see note 78), 283-86.

¹¹² *De natura* (see note 78), 288.

¹¹³ *De natura* (see note 78), 290-92.

catalogues information attributed to specific Greek and Latin writers in precise locations alongside his own observations and experiences, thereby identifying himself and his generation as heirs as well as contributors to classical learning. The types of water described by both are similar, although Hildegard's depictions seem modest compared to the Humanist scholar's detailed and nuanced categorizations. Theological analogies in Hildegard's writings, a reflection of the religious context in which the works were produced, have their counterpart in the sensual examination of the taste, smell, and color of waters that Agricola undertakes as part of his scientific study.

In the writings of both, water appears to be the first among equals, although its influence is determined to a great extent by interrelationships with air, fire, and earth. For Hildegard these connections and the significance of water in her cosmology afford the element a vibrant, mutable role that promotes a close association between humankind and the environment; derived from a living source, water bonds with all living things as well as their creator. Agricola's reports, examinations, and observations, designed to ascertain whether waters pose a risk to people's well-being or not, present a more distanced relationship between humanity and nature, one in which the element acts upon living beings rather than in harmony with them. Although its basic traits have not changed, in the course of four centuries since then there is clearly a different understanding of the element of water.

Cynthia White

Potiones ad sanandum: Text as Remedy in a Medieval Latin Bestiary

(VI.22.1) De hoc scriptum est in Deuteronomio non esse manducandum. Phisiologus dicit de hoc quia totus albus est et nullam partem habens nigrum. Cuius interior firmus curat caliginem oculorum. Iste in atriis regum invenitur. Si quis autem est in egritudine constitutus per hunc caladrium cognoscetur si vivet an morietur. Si enim est infirmitas hominis ad mortem, mox ut videt infirmum quia moriturus est avertit faciem suam ab eo et recedit. Si autem infirmitas eius non pertingit ad mortem caladrius intendit caput super faciem eius et aufert omnes infirmitates egroti volatque in ethera solis et comburit omnes infirmitates et dispergit eas sanaturque infirmus. Caladrius igitur nostri Salvatoris accipit personam.

[(VI.22.1) Concerning this bird¹ it has been written in Deuteronomy that it must not be eaten. *Physiologus* says of it that it is completely white and has no black part. Its intestine dung cures weak-sightedness. It is found in the courts of kings. If anyone has been diagnosed with an illness, it will be learned from this *charadrius* whether he will live or die: for if it is a mortal illness, as soon as it sees that the sick man is going to die, it turns its face from him and goes away; but if the illness is not deadly, the *charadrius* leans its head over his face and carries off all the infirmities of the sick person. It flies into the bright upper air of the sun and burns up all the infirmities and disperses them, and the sick man is healed. Thus the *charadrius* takes on the persona of our Savior (190–91).]

We owe these “medicinal” observations on the *charadrius* and others like them to the anonymous collection of stories in the thirteenth-century Medieval Latin *Northumberland Bestiary* (NB), the last known bestiary to have been in private hands before it was sold to the J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles (MS 100), in

¹ Herbert L. Kessler, “Christ the Magic Dragon,” *Gesta* 48.2 (2009): 119–34, discusses the curative potential of images of the *charadrius* in medieval texts and architecture.

2007.² Located in a field of study where medicine, religion, and the natural world intersect, the Medieval Latin bestiary has defied standard genre distinctions. Categorized oppositely among texts of natural science and pastoral care, bestiaries partake of both classifications. They include descriptions of folk remedies, like that of the beaver (*NB* V.9.1), called *castores* in Latin, whose testicles are used in the healing of diverse illnesses and who must, in order to survive, “castrate” themselves and throw their testicles to the hunters who pursue them; magic³ or components of magic rituals, like that of the elephant (*NB* V.19.3), whose bones and skin when burned emit an odor that drives away serpents; or pharmacological therapies, like that of the crocodile (*NB* V.13.1), from whose dung a perfume was made with which old and wrinkled prostitutes used to rub their faces to smooth out their wrinkles. They stayed lovely, the *Northumberland Bestiary* tells us, until perspiration dripped down and washed it off. As religious or spiritual curatives, these animal stories could also be minatory, like that of the antelope (*NB* V.3.1-2), whose twin horns can fell mighty trees but can also get inextricably tangled in a small bush and deliver the animal as easy prey to a hunter. The allegorical admonition explains that the two testaments can help man cut through all corporeal vices but also get bound up in those vices so that he is vulnerable to sin:

(V.3.1) [Antalops] habet autem longa cornua, serre figuram
 habencia, ita ut possit eciam arbores altas et magnas secare
 et ad terram deponere. Veniens autem incipit ludere cornibus
 suis ad herecinam et dum ludit obligat cornua sua in virgultis
 eius. Cum autem diu pugnat liberari non potest tunc exclamat
 voce magna. Audiens venator vocem eius venit et occidit
 eum. (3.2) Sic et tu, homo Dei, qui studes sobrius esse et
 spiritualiter vivere, cuius duo cornua sunt testamenta per
 que potes resecare et abscidere a te omnia vicia corporalia,
 hoc est adulterium, fornicacio, avaricia, invidia, superbia,

² Formerly Alnwick Castle 447, the *Northumberland Bestiary*, which had been in the possession of the dukes of Northumberland since the eighteenth century, was sold to a private collector in 1990. For a critical edition, translation and commentary, see Cynthia White, *From the Ark to the Pulpit: An Edition and Translation of the ‘Transitional’ Northumberland Bestiary (13th c.)* (Louvain-la-Neuve: Institut d’ études médiévaies de l’ Université Catholique de Louvain, 2009). All citations refer to this edition. The first manuscript reproduction is in *A Thirteenth Century Bestiary in the Library of Alnwick Castle*, ed. Eric G. Millar (Oxford: Roxburghe Club, 1958).

³ An exemplary study of the persistent “magic” of a bestiary creature is that of Brian P. Copenhaver, “A Tale of Two Fishes: Magical Objects in Natural History from Antiquity through the Scientific Revolution,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 52.3 (1991): 373–98. The ichthyological magic of the remora is fully explicated from the medieval bestiary tradition and forward, through the scientific revolution.

homicidium, detractio, ebrietas, luxuria, et omnis huius seculi pompa.

[(V.3.1) [The antelope] has long horns that have the shape of a saw, so that it can even saw through tall, mighty trees and fell them to the ground. It begins to tilt with its horns upon approaching the heath, and while it plays it catches its horns in its branches. When, after fighting for a long time, it cannot free itself, it bellows in a great voice. The hunter, hearing its voice, comes and kills it. (3.2) It is the same for you too, man of God, who are eager to be sober and to live spiritually. Your two horns are the Testaments through which you are able to cut back and prune all corporeal vices from yourself, that is, adultery, fornication, avarice, envy, pride, homicide, slander, drunkenness, luxury, and all the ostentation of this world (74–77).]

Other stories also anticipate spiritual healing through allegory, like that of the panther (*NB* V.18.1–3), who eats a hearty meal, sleeps in its cave, and rises after three days to emit a sweet odor. All other animals flock to the panther, just as Jesus Christ rose on the third day and emitted a great cry, and all who heard him, followed him.

(V.18.1) Cum ergo comederit et saciatum fuerit recondit se in spelunca sua et dormit. Post triduum vero exurgit a sompno et emittit magnum rugitum, et ab ore eius odor suavissimus exit velud omnium aromatum. Cum autem audierint eius vocem cetera animalia propter suavitatem odoris sequuntur eam quocumque ierit. (18.2) Sic et Dominus noster Iesus Christus verus panthera. (18.3) Sic et Dominus Iesus Christus tercia die resurgens a mortuis, ... Exclamavit voce magna ita ut audiretur in omni terra sonus eius et in fines orbis terre verba eius...Oportet nos quam cicius ... post unguentum mandatorum Christi currere; de terrenis ad celestia migrare, ut nos introducat rex in palacium suum.

[(V.18.1) When it eats and is sated, [the panther] hides in its cave and sleeps. After three days, it rises from sleep and emits a great roar, and from its mouth the sweetest odor wafts, like allspice. When other animals have heard its voice, they follow it wherever it goes. (18.2) So, too, our Lord Jesus Christ, is a true panther. (18.3) So, too, our Lord Jesus Christ rising from the dead on the third day ... cried out with such a voice that his sound was heard on all the earth, and his words to the ends of the earth...]

We should run as quickly as possible ... after the fragrance of the commandments of Christ; and we should pass from earthly to heavenly things, so that the king may lead us into his palace (96–101).]

Not least, sometimes the animals in the *Northumberland Bestiary* are simply food, as in the story of the stag⁴ (NB V.24.1): ‘Stags are said to live ninety years. When they feel they are becoming weak from sickness or old age, they draw snakes from their pits by the breath of their nostrils and, after overcoming the danger of their venom they are healed by the meal’ (“Dicuntur eciam nongentos vivere annos, atque cum infirmitate vel senectute deficere senserint spiritu narium serpentes de cavernis suis extrahunt et, superata eorum pernicie veneni, pabulo reparantur”). Whatever the intention of these texts, bestiaries represent a unique and short-lived episode in literature and medical historiography.⁵ Dating from just

⁴ See Guy R. Mermier, “The Romanian Bestiary: An English Translation and Commentary on the Ancient ‘Physiologus’ Tradition,” *Mediterranean Studies* 13 (2004): 17–55, especially 33–34. The story appears widely in late antique pagan and Patristic texts, e.g., Servius *ad Buc.* 7.30, in *Servii Grammatici qui feruntur in Vergili carmina commentarii*, ed. Georg Thilo and Hermann Hagen, 3 vols. (Leipzig: Teubner, 1883; Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1961); Jerome, *In Hieremiam prophetam* 3.14.5, in *Hieronymus in Hieremiam libri VI*, ed. Siegfried Reiter. *Corpus Christianorum Series Latina* (CCSL), 74 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1960); for the English, see *Commentary on Jeremiah*, ed. and trans. Christopher A. Hall and Michael Graves. *Ancient Christian Texts* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2012); and Origen, *In Canticum Canticorum homilia* 2.11, in *Homélies sur le Cantique des Cantiques*, ed. D. O. Rousseau. *Sources Chrétiennes* (SC), 37 (1954; Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1966), 64–65; for the English, see *The Song of Songs, Commentary and Homilies*, ed. and trans. R. P. Lawson. *Ancient Christian Writers* (ACW), 26 (New York: Paulist Press, 1957). In another entry, the crab (NB VII.17.1) rehearses an elaborate deception to obtain a ‘banquet of the flesh of the oyster’ (“carnis eius epulum sibi querit”).

⁵ For general and specific bestiary studies, see Florence McCulloch, *Mediaeval Latin and French Bestiaries*. Studies in the Romance Languages and Literatures, 33 (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1962); Xenia Muratova, *The Medieval Bestiary* (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1984); *Beasts and Birds of the Middle Ages: The Bestiary and Its Legacy*, ed. Willene B. Clark and Meredith T. McMunn. The Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989); Ann Payne, *Medieval Beasts* (London: British Library, 1990); Wilma George and Brundson Yapp, *The Naming of the Beasts: Natural History in the Medieval Bestiary* (London: British Library, 1991); Debra Hassig, *Medieval Bestiaries: Text, Image, Ideology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Ron Baxter, *Bestiaries and Their Users in the Middle Ages* (Stroud, Gloucestershire: Sutton Publishing, 1998); Lucy Freeman Sandler and Christopher de Hamel, *The Peterborough Bestiary, MS 53 (fol. 189–210v)*, *The Parker Library, College of Corpus Christi and the Blessed Virgin Mary, Cambridge* (Lucerne: Faksimile Verlag, 2003); *Bestiaires médiévaux. Nouvelles perspectives sur les manuscrits et les traditions textuelles*, ed. Baudouin Van den Abeele. Collection Textes, études, congrès, 21 (Louvain-la-Neuve: Publications de l’institut d’études médiévales,

before the West's reception of Aristotle⁶ and enlarged sections of the Hippocratic⁷ and Galenic treatises from Syriac and Arabic translations,⁸ bestiaries possess a unique multi-valence. They are at once zoological compilations,⁹ religious and moral allegories in the expansive corpus of *ars predicandi*,¹⁰ elaborate etymol-

Université Catholique de Louvain, 2005); Willene B. Clark, *A Medieval Book of Beasts: The Second-Family Bestiary. Commentary, Art, Text and Translation* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell Press, 2006); Christopher de Hamel, *Book of Beasts: A Facsimile of MS Bodley 764* (Oxford: Bodleian Library, 2008); Susan Crane, "A Bestiary's Taxonomy of Creatures," *Animal Encounters: Contacts and Concepts in Medieval Britain*. The Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 69–100.

6 Tullio Gregory, "L'idea di natura nella filosofia medievale prima dell'ingresso della fisica di Aristotele: Il secolo XII," *La filosofia della natura nel Medioevo: Atti del terzo congresso internazionale di filosofia medievale* (Milan: Vita e Pensiero, 1966): 27–65. Luis García-Ballester, "The Construction of a New Form of Learning and Practicing Medicine in Medieval Latin Europe," *Science in Context* 8.1 (1995): 75–102. For the Greek and English, see Aristotle, *Historia Animalium*, ed. and trans. D. M. Balme, Allan Gotthelf, and A. L. Peck. Loeb Classical Library, 437, 438, 439 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1965–1991).

7 See Jacques Jouanna, *Hippocrates*, trans. M. B. DeBevoise (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999 [original title: *Hippocrate* (Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 1992)]) with the review essay by John Scarborough, "Hippocrates and the Hippocratic Ideal in Modern Medicine," *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* 9.2 (2002): 287–97. On the survival of this corpus, see Owsei Temkin, *Hippocrates in a World of Pagans and Christians* (1991; Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997). Mark J. Schiefsky, *Hippocrates On Ancient Medicine. Translated with Introduction and Commentary*. Studies in Ancient Medicine, 28 (Leiden and Boston: E. J. Brill, 2005), addresses the larger question of the relationship of philosophy and medicine in his introduction to the text. For the reception of Hippocrates in medical education, see *Hippocrates and Medical Education: Selected Papers Read at the XIIth International Hippocrates Colloquium, Universiteit Leiden, 24–26 August 2005*, ed. Manfred Horstmannhoff and Cornelis van Tilburg (Leiden and Boston: E. J. Brill, 2010).

8 Manfred Ullmann, *Die Medizin im Islam*. Handbuch der Orientalistik, 6.1 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1970), 25–35, lists important medical texts in Arabic. See also Gotthard Strohmaier, "Uses of Galen in Arabic Literature," *The Unknown Galen*, ed. Vivian Nutton. Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies Supplement, 77 (London: Institute of Classical Studies, 2002), 113–20.

9 Willene B. Clark, "Zoology in the Medieval Latin Bestiary," *Man and Nature in the Middle Ages*, ed. Susan J. Ridyard and Robert G. Benson (Sewanee, TN: University of the South Press, 1995), 223–45.

10 Bestiaries and their images were mined for sermons from as early as the twelfth century. Important studies include: John Morson, "The English Cistercians and the Bestiary," *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 39 (1956): 146–70; Cynthia White, "The Northumberland Bestiary and the Art of Preaching," *Reinardus* 18 (2005): 167–92; Nigel Morgan, "Pictured Sermons in Thirteenth-Century England," *Tributes to Jonathan J. G. Alexander: The Making and Meaning of Illuminated Medieval & Renaissance Manuscripts, Art & Architecture*, ed. Susan L'Engle and Gerald B. Guest (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), 323–40; and Siegfried Wenzel, *Medieval 'Artes Praedicandi': A Synthesis of Scholastic Sermon Structure* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015).

ogies,¹¹ technical and therefore practical texts, and proto-encyclopedias.¹² The elusive bestiary genre and its transmission as much as the taxonomy of animals or animal parts they describe have not yet been studied in medieval scientific literature through the lens of medicine.¹³ Nor has the implication of religion and medical historiography been a focus of their readings.¹⁴ The *Northumberland Bestiary* and others like it applied a grand medical similitude in inferring Christian mysteries from the habits of animals: God as divine physician heals mankind through His Word just as preachers use animal behaviors in allegorical sermons on the divine Word of God to “heal” the soul for its resurrection.¹⁵

Such a study is complicated by the enigmatic premise in the creation prologue of the *Northumberland Bestiary*, that the God of all of creation is necessarily the God both of all suffering and all healing. According to this view, God is the source both of practical medicine, which alleviates pain by using natural remedies in the name of Christian charity, and the source of theoretical or rational medicine, as the source of physicians’ skills.¹⁶ This skill extends to the “medicina

11 Twelfth-century additions from the *Etymologiae (Etymologies)* of Isidore of Seville (ca. 560–636) point to the power of rhetoric and speech in illuminating the names of the animals from the divine mysteries inherent in their allegories. See the excellent commentary in *Isidore de Seville, Etymologiae, Livre xii, Des animaux*, ed. Jacques André (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1986). For the English, see *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville*, ed. and trans. Stephen A. Barney, W. J. Lewis, J. A. Beach, and Oliver Berghof (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

12 On this genre development, see the study of Baudouin Van den Abeele, “Un bestiaire à la croisée des genres: Le manuscrit Cambridge UL Gg.6.5,” *Reinardus* 13 (2000): 215–36.

13 But see the focused study by Iolanda Ventura, “The *Curae ex animalibus* in the Medical Literature of the Middle Ages: The Example of the Illustrated Herbals,” *Bestiaires médiévaux*, ed. Baudouin Van den Abeele (see note 5), 213–48, here 216. Cf. Y. Tzvi Langerman, “From My Notebooks: *Materia Medica et Magica* from Animals, including a Long, Unknown Passage from al-Mas ‘ūdi,” *Aleph* 11.1 (2011): 169–78, who argues that “texts belonging to the utilization of animal parts in medicine and magic have hardly been studied at all by historians of science” (169).

14 Excellent studies on medicine and religion in the Middle Ages include Joseph Ziegler, *Medicine and Religion c. 1300: The Case of Arnau de Vilanova* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998); and Gary B. Ferngren, *Medicine and Religion: A Historical Introduction* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014), especially 93–135.

15 For a general discussion of secondary, metaphorical significances of animal species in the Middle Ages, see Christopher R. Clason, “Animals, Birds, and Fish in the Middle Ages,” *Handbook of Medieval Culture: Fundamental Aspects and Conditions of the European Middle Ages*, ed. Albrecht Classen, 3 vols. (Berlin/Boston: Walter De Gruyter, 2015), 1.18–54.

16 As expressed in Sirach (ca. 200 B.C.) 38.2 (NAB), e.g.: “From God, the doctor has his wisdom ...”; 38.4: “God makes the earth yield healing herbs”; 38.6–7: “He endows men with the knowledge to glory in his mighty works/Through which the doctor eases pain and the druggist prepares his medicines”; 38.9: “My son, when you are ill, delay not, but pray to God, who will heal you ...”; and 38.12: “Then give the doctor his place lest he leave; for you need him too.”

spiritualis animarum,” the ‘spiritual medicine of souls.’ In its prefatory material on creation, the *Northumberland Bestiary* also includes a sermon, the identity of which continues to elude scholars,¹⁷ who have, in some instances, termed it “totally irrelevant to the bestiary.”¹⁸ Entitled “How the Sinner is Able to Be Pleasing to God” (“Quotienscumque peccator vult factori suo placere”), it does seem jarring when it appears at the close of the creation material (*NB* IV.1–2.1), just after Adam has given names to beasts and birds. But the sermon may not be random. If we read the *Northumberland Bestiary* as a moral corrective, as ‘spiritual medicine of souls,’ the sermon (*NB* IV.2.1) anticipates the text’s teleological intent – a soul healed of its infirmities and prepared for resurrection – and also suggests that the text is the means by which the spiritual medicine is to be applied:

(IV.1) Sicut corpori debilitato necessarie sunt pociones ad sanandas illius infirmitates, ita anime peccatrici necessaria est pocio per quam sanetur spiritualis eius corrupcio.

(IV.2.1) Fit autem pocio anime ex IIII speciebus, id est cordis ploratu, vera confessione, penitencia vera, operacione recta. Que ita competens est ad sanandas illius infirmitates quod dum ab ea anima inungitur, statim a suis infirmitatibus sanatur.

[(IV.1) Just as medicines are necessary to heal the infirmities of a weakened body, so, too, a medicine is necessary to heal the sinful spirit of its spiritual corruption. (IV.2.1) This medicine for the soul is made from four ingredients, that is, lamentation of the heart, true confession, true penitence, and earnest work. It is so effective for healing its infirmities that when the soul is anointed by it, it is healed of its infirmities immediately (64–65).]

In the *Northumberland Bestiary*, this fluid boundary between corporeal and spiritual healing reflects its characteristic world view, that salvation relies upon

¹⁷ Ilya Dines, “The Problem of the *Transitional Family* of Bestiaries,” *Reinardus* 24 (2011–2012): 29–52, identifies part of the sermon (p. 35, n. 2 and Appendix I, p. 41) as “a twelfth-century manuscript of English origin, Edinburgh, UL MS 105 (formerly MS Laing 56), ff. 24rv.”

¹⁸ M. R. James, *The Bestiary, being a reproduction in full of the manuscript Li.4.26 in the University Library, Cambridge, with supplementary plates from other manuscripts of English origin, and a preliminary study of the Latin Bestiary as current in England* (Oxford: Roxburghe Club, 1928), 12, and also 14, where he calls the sermon “pointless.” Cf. Ron Baxter, *Bestiaries and Their Modern Users* (see note 5), 113, who likewise considers the sermon to “sit uneasily with the other material.”

the moral health of the soul, a realm analogous to the health of the body.¹⁹ Medical and religious discourse fuse as each animal story becomes a similitude for spiritual healing. The ecclesiastical reforms under Innocent III (1198–1216) were contemporaneous with the period of bestiary production. Both the *Northumberland Bestiary* and many ecclesiastical documents of the thirteenth century consider moral remediation to be a priority. As in the *Northumberland Bestiary*, in Canon 22 of Lateran IV (1215), a document produced about thirty years before it, the cure of one's soul and a medical corporeal cure involve reticulated treatments: in the *Canon*, as in the *Northumberland Bestiary* sermon, physicians are warned not to begin treatment until a priest had seen to the patient's 'spiritual health' ("de spirituali salute"). Only then was there hope for a 'medical remedy' ("ad corporalis medicinae remedium"); for 'just as the body requires material nourishment, the soul requires spiritual nourishment' ("quia sicut corpus materiali sic anima spirituali cibo nutritur"). And ministers (physicians of the soul) were enjoined to edify 'by word and example' ("verbo edificant et exemplo") in preaching, hearing confessions, imposing penances and performing the other duties that 'pertain to the health of souls' ("ad salutem pertinent animarum"), and to refrain from prescribing anything 'for bodily health' ("pro corporali salute") 'that might endanger the soul' ("quod in periculum animae convertatur").²⁰

This symbiotic relationship of rational and irrational healing was in part subject to the laws of philology, the power of persuasion. Moreover, the fundamental view that the natural world, however mutable and however filled with strange creatures, fit into God's scheme was, like God, immutable. In this view, the natural world is made of different elements bound together in God's plan and the *Northumberland Bestiary*, also a compendium of varied entries bound together, mirrors that world, a textual representation of the mysterious omnip-

¹⁹ Mary K. K. Yearl, "Medicine for the Wounded Soul," *Wounds in the Middle Ages*, ed. Anne Kirkham and Cordelia Warr. *The History of Medicine in Context* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2014), 109–30, using examples from the texts of Hugh of Fouilloy and William of Saint-Thierry, argues that there is a link between medical treatments of the body and curative treatments of the soul in the twelfth-century.

²⁰ See *Conciliarum Oecumenicorum Generaliumque Decreta: Editio Critica*, ed. A. García y García et al. Vol. II, Part I: *From Constantinople IV to Pavia-Siena (869–1424)* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013), 178–79 (22) and 172–73 (10). For the English, see *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, ed. and trans. Norman P. Tanner, S. J., 2 vols. (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1990) 1.245–46: 22. *That the Sick Should Provide for the Soul before the Body*; and 1.239–40: 10. *On Appointing Preachers*. Cf. Ziegler, *Medicine and Religion c. 1300* (see note 14), 9–10 and n. 33, who, instead, interprets the canon as creating "boundaries between the physicians of the body and those of the soul."

otent creator. As a key to scripture, stories in the *Northumberland Bestiary* and their moral allegories affirm a benevolent omnipotence in God's divine plan.²¹

The period of production of the *Northumberland Bestiary* also marked the heyday of Latin bestiary manufacture. According to Ron Baxter, the approximately ninety Latin bestiaries that survive represent no more than twenty per cent of the total number, approximately three-quarters of which date to the thirteenth century²² and almost all from the mid-twelfth to the late thirteenth centuries.²³ In the introduction to his 1928 publication, M. R. James included descriptions of forty-one English Latin bestiaries, mostly analyzing the provenience, chapters, and codicological details. He grouped the manuscripts into four families according to their textual organization,²⁴ which he considered of little literary or scientific value.²⁵ Dividing them according to their contents and organization in 1960 and then again in 1962, Florence McCulloch reorganized M. R. James's four-family classification and her divisions remain fundamentally unchanged.²⁶

This period of high production also captures a precise moment in medieval medicine before a new form of medicine became widespread in the West with

21 The medieval accounts of *mirabilia* shared in this view of a divine, if inexplicable, world order. Like the bestiary's creatures, all of nature could be hermeneutically explored to make the invisible visible. For a comprehensive overview of medieval "wonders," including fantastic animals/accounts in bestiaries, see Lorraine Daston and Katharine Park, *Wonders and the Order of Nature 1150–1750* (New York: Zone Books, 1998).

22 *Bestiaries and Their Users* (see note 5), 166–69. Arguing that Latin bestiary production was predominantly an English monastic activity, Baxter (169) lists among surviving bestiaries 50 English, 9 French/Flemish, and 1 German; 36 are from 32 English houses, 5 from 32 houses in France, and 3 from 108 houses in Germany and Switzerland.

23 Christopher de Hamel, *Book of Beasts: A Facsimile of MS Bodley 764* (see note 5), 6.

24 Susan Crane, "A Bestiary's Taxonomy of Creatures," *Animal Encounters* (see note 5), 69–100, argues that the bestiary project does not in fact deal primarily with animal behavior as a sign for spiritual meaning but instead is taxonomic – the assembling of a world view by working out a classification of the world's creatures in all their dimensions, including physical, moral, and spiritual. In this, she is in accord with Michael J. Curley *Physiologus: A Medieval Book of Nature Lore* (1979; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), the scholar who translated the *Physiologus* versions into English and defines its author as "one who interpreted metaphysically, morally, and finally, mystically the transcendent significance of the natural world" (xv).

25 For a discussion of bestiaries as devotional books, with apt comparisons between the book size, Gothic hand, the initial letters in *B(eatus) v(ir)* and *B(estiarum) v(ocabulum)*, creation illustrations, and hidden layers of meaning see Christopher de Hamel, *Book of Beasts: A Facsimile of MS Bodley 764* (see note 5), 18–21.

26 Florence McCullough, *Medieval Latin and French Bestiaries* (see note 5), 25–44; cf. the classification of second-family manuscripts in Willene B. Clark, *A Medieval Book of Beasts* (see note 5), 256.

the translation of Arabic medical texts. In the *Northumberland Bestiary*, physical health relies upon spiritual well-being, that is, being right with God. The care of the soul is privileged over that of the body. Yet, the spiritual remedies in the *Northumberland Bestiary* deliver much more than *sanitas* in life: they guarantee the immortal life promised in the Christian doctrine of resurrection. The *Northumberland Bestiary* embodies a unique medical and spiritual healing, and it is worthwhile to review its sources, both literary and in medical writings, to discern what has been adapted or transformed and what is original.

Physiologus ('The Natural Philosopher')

At the heart of the bestiary literary tradition is the *Physiologus*, a text that still confounds scholarly exactitude.²⁷ Second only to the Bible in its wide dissemination, this anonymous Greek text of animal lore must have been circulating by the second or third century C.E.; it was likely compiled in Alexandria,²⁸ a hub for the kinds of Near Eastern, Egyptian, Greek, and Roman stories it canonized. In it, animals are read as semiotic representations for spiritual teaching, not solely as creatures in nature, and *Physiologus*, the 'Natural Philosopher,' perhaps both the title and the narrator, explicates the moralizing allegory according to Christian doctrine. Here is the account of the *charadrius* from the *Physiologus*, which contains several details missing in the *Northumberland Bestiary* account we saw above.²⁹

There is another kind of flying animal called the *charadrius*
mentioned in Deuteronomy [14:18] which is entirely

27 For the texts, history, and translations of the *Physiologus*, the following are seminal sources: Francesco Sbordone, "La tradizione del 'Physiologo' latino," *Athenaeum*, n. s. 27 (1949): 246–80; Nikolaus Henkel, *Studien zum Physiologus im Mittelalter*. Hermaea: Germanistische Forschung, 38 (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1976); *Physiologus Latinus: éditions préliminaires versio B*, ed. Francis J. Carmody (Paris: Librairie Eugénie Droz, 1939), and *Physiologus Latinus Versio Y*, ed. Francis J. Carmody (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1941); Francesco Zambon, *Il Fisiologo* (Milan: Adelphi, 1975); P. Cox, "The *Physiologus*: A Poesis of Nature," *Church History* 52 (1983): 433–43; Otto Seel, *Der Physiologus: Tiere und ihre Symbolik* (Zürich: Artemis-Verlag, 1992); and P. Docampo Alvarez and J. A. Villar Vidal, "El fisiólogo latino: Versión B: 1 introducción y texto latino," *Revista de Literatura Medieval* 15.1 (2003): 9–54.

28 Alexandria was also one of the most important centers of medical training in the Hellenistic and late antique periods. See Gabriele Marasco, "The Curriculum of Studies in the Roman Empire and the Cultural Role of Physicians," *Hippocrates and Medical Education* (see note 7), 205–19.

29 Michael J. Curley, *Physiologus: A Medieval Book of Nature Lore* (see note 24), 7–8.

white with no black part at all. His excrement is a cure for those whose eyes are growing dim and he is found in the halls of kings. If someone is ill, whether he will live or die can be known from the *charadrius*. The bird turns his face away from the man whose illness will bring death and thus everyone knows that he is going to die. On the other hand, if the disease is not fatal, the *charadrius* stares the sick man in the face and the sick man stares back at the *charadrius*, who releases him from his illness. Then, flying up to the atmosphere of the sun, the *charadrius* burns away the sick man's illness and scatters it abroad.

Its allegorical interpretation follows in the next paragraph:

The *charadrius* is our Savior and the one who is ill receives the good person of our Savior who is entirely white without spot or wrinkle [cf. Eph. 5:27]. The Lord himself said in the Gospel, “The ruler of this world is coming, and he will find nothing against me [John 14: 30].” For “He committed no sin; no guile was found on his lips [I Peter 2: 22].” And coming down from heaven to the Jewish people, he turned his divine nature from them, saying, “Behold, your abandoned house is forsaken [Lk. 13: 35].” Yet he came down to us, the Gentiles, taking away our infirmities [Matt. 8: 17] and carrying off our sins [cf. Is. 53:4]; and he was lifted up to the wood of the cross: “Ascending on high, he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men [Ps. 68: 18 and Eph. 4: 8].” [“Indeed, those who believed not, received not. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God” [John 1:12].]

In this account, the sick man is cured, but the cure is spiritual: a zoological snippet of animal lore is turned into a spiritual commentary by allegorizing the bird's turning away to bring about a physical healing, to the faithful turning to Jesus, the true *charadrius*, that is, to achieve a spiritual healing. When we compare the *Physiologus* entry on the *charadrius* to the version in the *Northumberland Bestiary*, there are few differences: the *charadrius* carries off the illness and this is interpreted as Jesus carrying off our sins, empowering all who receive him to enter the kingdom of God.³⁰ But in other instances the *Physiologus* versions are completely different from those in the *Northumberland Bestiary*. For example, in the *Physiologus* version, the roe-deer loves high mountains and foothills; she

30 Cf. Jn 3:5–6.

sees who approaches from far off and can tell if they are friends or foe. These traits are interpreted allegorically as representing the wisdom of God “who loves the prophets, that is, the high mountains toward which the Prophet has raised his eyes.”³¹ Her keen vision signifies that God sees all things, and from afar he sees those approaching him with guile. The roe-deer in the Bestiary (*NB* V.15.1–2) follows the *Physiologus* but adds (V.15.3) a final paragraph that includes a medical antidote interpreted allegorically as spiritual healing:

(V.15.3) Caprea has habet naturas: quod pascendo de altis ad alciora tendit, bonas herbas a noxiis oculorum acumine eligit, herbas ruminat, vulnerata ad dictamnum currit qua tacta sanatur. Sic boni predicatores pascentes in lege Domini et in bonis operibus quasi in pastu delectantes de virtute in virtutem descendunt. Bonas sentencias a malis oculis cordis eligunt et electas ruminant, id est bonum perscrutantur et ruminatas tradunt memorie. A peccato vulnerati ad Christum confitentes recurrent et cito sanantur. Ideoque Christus bene dictamus dicitur.

[(V.15.3) The roe-deer has these natures: while feeding it moves from high to higher places; it weeds out good plants from harmful ones by the sharpness of its vision; it ruminates these plants; and when wounded it runs to the dittany and is healed by its touch. Thus good preachers feeding on the Law of the Lord and delighting in good works as if in pasture ascend from virtue to virtue. They choose good thoughts over bad with the eyes of the heart and ruminate upon the ones chosen, that is, they scrutinize the good and commit their ruminations to memory. Wounded by sin they run to Christ in confession and are quickly healed. For this reason, Christ is ‘well called’ [“bene dicitur”] “dictamus” (92–93).]

In the *Northumberland Bestiary*, the wounded roe-deer is healed by the dittany plant. Well known in antiquity for its abundance on Mt. Dicte, from where it took its name, it appears in classical texts as well as in Pliny, Ambrose, Isidore, and Hrabanus Maurus – all typical sources for bestiaries.³² Moreover, the roe-

³¹ Michael J. Curley, *Physiologus: A Medieval Book of Nature Lore* (see note 24), 33.

³² The stag (*NB* V.24.1) is also cured by the dittany (*origanum dictamnus*). On the dittany, see Marina Heilmeyer, *Ancient Herbs* (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2007), 42–43; and the following common sources for bestiaries: Cicero, *De natura deorum* 2.50.126, in Cicero, *De natura deorum*, ed. Arthur S. Pease, 2 vols. (1958; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1955); for the English, see *On the Nature of the Gods*, trans. Patrick G. Walsh (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997); Vergil, *Aeneid* 4.73, 12.411–15, in *P. Vergili Maronis opera*, ed. Roger A. B. Mynors (Oxford: Clar-

deer that move from high to higher places are interpreted as good preachers who ascend ‘from virtue to virtue’ (“de virtute in virtutem”). As roe-deer use their keen vision to weed out good plants from harmful ones, good preachers use their keen vision to discern good thoughts from bad. They then preach those ‘good thoughts’ (“bonas sententias”) to their congregations, as spiritual physicians administering medicine to their congregants’ souls through persuasive sermons embedding bestiary stories. Just as by the dittany the wounded roe-deer ‘is cured’ (“sanatur”), preachers heal and ‘are healed’ (“sanantur”) by confession, the prerequisite of any medical treatment, as we saw above in the Canons (10 and 22) of Lateran IV. Only then are they made ready to preach to their congregations. Finally, in a clever pun reflective of the etymological compendia that were current in the period of the bestiary compilations, Christ is “bene dictamus dicitur” (‘well named “dittany”’): by “bene dictamus” is understood “benedictus,” or ‘blessed.’ Through a play on the Latin words, the medicinal healing herb dittany is transformed into the spiritual healer, the ‘blessed’ (“benedictus”) Christ.³³ We can easily imagine the story of the roe-deer and its allegory and etymological pun as the core material for a didactic sermon which, if its moral instruction is

endon Press, 1972); for the English, see Virgil, *Aeneid*, trans. Henry Rushton Fairclough and G. P. Goold. Loeb Classical Library, 63, 64 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999–2000); Pliny, *Historia naturalis* 8.97, 20.156, 25.92, 26.142, in *C. Plinii Secundi Naturalis historia*, ed. Detlef Detlefsen, 3 vols. (1866; Berlin: Weidmann, 1992); for the English, see *Pliny the Elder Natural History*, trans. H. Rackham, W. H. S. Jones and D. E. Eichholz. Loeb Classical Library, 353, 392, 393 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1938–1962); Ambrose, *Hexaemeron* 6.4.26, in *Ambrosius, Hexameron, De paradiso, De Cain, De Noe, De Abraham, De Isaac, De bono mortis*, ed. Carolus Schenkl. Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum (CSEL), 32.1 (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1896; New York: Johnson Reprint, 1962); for the English, see *Saint Ambrose. Hexaemeron, Paradise, Cain and Abel*, trans. John Savage. Fathers of the Church (FOTC), 42 (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1961); Isidore, *Etymologiae* 179.29, in *Isidori Hispanensis Episcopi Etymologiarum sive originum libri xx*, ed. Wallace M. Lindsay, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1911); for the English, see *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville*, ed. and trans. Stephen A. Barney, et al., (see note 11); Hrabanus Maurus, *De rerum natura* 19.8, in *Beati Rabani Mauri de naturis rerum libri viginti duo*, PL 111.9–614, ed. J.-P. Migne (Paris, 1844–1865); for the English, see *Hrabanus Maurus, De Universo: The Peculiar Properties of Words and Their Mystical Significance*, trans. Priscilla Throop, 2 vols. (Charlotte, VT: Medieval MS, 2009).

³³ On Jesus as ‘physician’ in early Christian literature, see the discussion of Jesus as Ἰατρός in the excellent study of René Josef Rüttimann, “Asclepius and Jesus: The Form, Character and Status of the Asclepius Cult in the Second Century CE and Its Influence on Early Christianity,” Ph. D. Harvard Divinity School, 1987, 155–78; and Darrel W. Amundsen, *Medicine, Society, and Faith in the Ancient and Medieval Worlds* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 1–29.

followed, ensures the spiritual healing indispensable to attaining immortality in the kingdom of God.

A mix of biblical, Christian, and pagan stories that originally reproduced approximately 26 to 48 such stories, the *Physiologus* underwent dramatic change in subsequent centuries. There was a Latin version by the fourth century, certainly by the time Ambrose quoted a section on the partridge in his *Hexameron* in 386 CE, and, by the fifth century, translations had been rendered into Arabic, Syriac, Armenian, and Ethiopian. The earliest surviving illustrated manuscript, Bern 318,³⁴ dates from the ninth century, but the version on which this depends is one of at least four, called *A*, *B*, *C*, and *Y*, which themselves have multiple offspring in prose and verse in France and England, at least. It is the *Physiologus-B* and less often the longer *-Y* that are the ultimate sources, in general, for the English Latin bestiary. This core text along with a recognizable assembly of twelfth- and thirteenth-century accretions – among classical authors, most often Pliny's prolific *Historia naturalis* (ca. 77 C.E.) and Solinus's thaumatographical *Collectanea rerum memorabilium* (4th c.); front matter from Genesis; the Early Christian hexaemeral literature; extensive additions from Book XII of the *Etymologiae* of Isidore of Seville (570–636); and material from the encyclopedic *De rerum natura* of the Carolingian ecclesiast Hrabanus Maurus (776–856) and the anonymous twelfth-century *De bestiis et aliis* – seem to have given rise to the Medieval Latin bestiary literary tradition. But the unique compilation that becomes the bestiary also relies implicitly upon the interrelated development of religion and medicine in the Greco-Roman tradition. In order to explicate the medical, moral, and spiritual healings in the *Northumberland Bestiary* it will be useful to survey the reciprocal medical and spiritual healing intrinsic to non-Christian sources.

The Greco-Roman Medical Traditions

The same conflation of divine and human agencies in healing efforts found in the *Northumberland Bestiary* is also found in Greco-Roman accounts of medical interventions. Plato's *Phaedrus*, one of the most important early testimonies about the Hippocratic method, has Socrates explain that rhetoric and medicine both attempt to understand their subjects by dividing nature; the one, medicine, was concerned with the nature of the body, and the other, rhetoric, with the nature

³⁴ *Physiologus Bernensis: Voll-Faksimile-Ausgabe des Codex Bongarsianus 318 der Bürgerbibliothek Bern*, ed. Christoph von Steiger and Otto Homburger (Basel: Alkuin Verlag, 1964).

of the soul. Plato's contemporary, Hippocrates of Cos (fl. ca. 425), is cited in the *Phaedrus* (270c–d) as authority for the premise that just as a rhetorician cannot know the nature of the soul without knowing the nature of the whole man, a physician cannot know the nature of individual parts of the body without knowing how it functions in the whole body, including the soul, and the relation of both of these concepts to nature.³⁵ For Hippocrates, as for Plato, the breaking down of bodies into hierarchical categories and basic elements was an intellectual activity fundamental to medicine, rhetoric, philosophy, and philology. This relationship between epistemology and therapy profoundly influenced subsequent Hellenistic medical, philological (including philosophy and rhetoric), and literary perspectives and analyses. Hereafter, medicine connotes its spiritual, ethical, and religious counterparts.

In the fifth and fourth centuries B.C.E., Platonic philosophy and medicine attempted to explain corporal creatures with immortal souls. The Hellenistic Stoic Zeno of Kition (336–262 B.C.E.) likewise did not distinguish spiritual health from physical health. He considered medical treatment to rest in the proper combination of knowledge and craft ($\tauέχνη$), the latter of which had the power to cure diseases of the soul. Like Hippocrates, he believed that philosophy along with its twin study rhetoric were the arts that could cure the soul. This is the concept behind the famed Hippocratean aphorism *ars longa vita brevis*, where *ars* or *techné* ($\tauέχνη$) is understood to encompass both art and science, a theoretical enterprise that results in professional practice. Referring to this, Zeno wrote: “There is nothing of which we are in greater need than time. For indeed, life is short but the art [$\tauέχνη$][=art and science] is long, especially that which has the power to heal diseases of the soul.”³⁶

Although Roman medicine adopted outright its basic humoral theory of pathology from the Greeks, Roman medical texts also continued to develop the

35 Cf. Plato, *Timaeus*, 87c–90, e.g., 88b: “...the one means of salvation is this – neither to exercise the soul without the body nor the body without the soul, so that they may be evenly matched and sound of health.”

36 For the Zeno fragment in Greek, see Hans Friedrich August von Arnim, *Stoicorum veterum fragmenta collegit Ioannes a Arnim*, 4 vols. (Leipzig: Teubner, 1903–1924), fr. 323, 1.70. The full Greek text is from Hippocrates, *Aphorisms*, trans. W. H. S. Jones. Loeb Classical Library, 150 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1931), 98 (my translation): “Life is short and [the acquisition of] art/skill long; opportunity flitting, experience unreliable, a means of judging difficult. [The physician] must be ready to do what is necessary himself.” For the larger debate in the Hellenistic period, see Joel E. Mann, *Hippocrates: On the Art of Medicine*. Studies in Ancient Medicine 39 (Leiden and Boston: E. J. Brill, 2012), Appendix: “*De Arte* and the Hellenistic Debate,” 235–53.

moral dimension and philosophical underpinning to good health.³⁷ And religious healing is by no means eschewed: religious shrines and temples and medical cures delivered by divine agency also had a place. This link between body and soul and human and divine is explicit in political and public responses to widespread health threats: when Rome was suffering the plague of 433 B.C.E., according to Livy (*Ab urbe condita* 4.25.3), ‘a temple was established to Apollo, for the health of the people’ (“aedes Apollini pro valetudine populi vota est”). So, too, in the plague of the 290s B.C.E. In that instance, when the city’s leaders realize that no human attempts and no medical arts can halt the mounting deaths, ‘they seek divine aid’ (“auxilium caeleste petunt”).³⁸ It was the Greek god Asclepius who relieved Rome of its three-year plague ‘with great celerity’ (“mira celeritate”) when a delegation of priests was sent to Epidaurus, the great shrine of Asclepius.³⁹ Upon return, they were able to deliver to the Temple of Asclepius on the Tiber Island in the center of Rome a snake, the numen of the healing god, from the sacred precincts of the *Asklepieion* in Greece.⁴⁰ Moreover, the Roman Senate

³⁷ Ido Israelowich, *Patients and Healers in the High Roman Empire* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2015), 19–20, in discussing the impact of Asclepiades of Bithynia, a Greek physician in Rome in the first century B.C.E., highlights his philosophical discourses and medical education and the assumption that physicians were expected to demonstrate ‘moral propriety’ (“probitas morum”), including mercy and humanity, and ‘medical skill’ (“peritia artis”). Not uncommonly, physicians embody this confluence of medicine and religion, as priests of the gods of healing, especially the most important god of healing in antiquity – Asclepius.

³⁸ Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 15.622–744; here, 630; for the Latin and English, see Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, trans. Frank J. Miller and G. P. Goold. Loeb Classical Library, 43 (1977; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984). Other important ancient accounts of this aetiology include Valerius Maximus, *Factorum et dictorum memorabilium libri ix*, 1.8.2: for the Latin and English, see Valerius Maximus, *Memorable Doings and Sayings*, ed. and trans. D. R. Shackleton Bailey. Loeb Classical Library, 493 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000); Livy, *Ab urbe condita* 10.47.6–7 and *Periochae* 11: for the Latin and English, see Livy, *History of Rome, Books 8–10*, trans. B. O. Foster. Loeb Classical Library, 191 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1926); Plutarch, *Quaestiones Romanae* 94, *Moralia IV, Roman Questions*: for the Greek and English, see Plutarch, *Moralia*, trans. Frank Cole Babbitt. Loeb Classical Library, 305 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1936); Arnobius, *Adversus nationes* 7.44–48, expresses contempt for the worship of a god (Asclepius) in the form of a snake. For the contextualization of Arnobius’s views, see now the introduction in Bernard Fragu, *Arnobie Contre les gentils (Contre les païens)* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2010), 6.54.6–7; for the Latin text, see 66–71.

³⁹ Valerius Maximus (see note 38), provides the most detailed account.

⁴⁰ On Greco-Roman religious and medical practices, see Vivian Nutton, *Ancient Medicine* (2004; London: Routledge, 2012), especially 160–73, for the importation from Greece of Roman and more widespread (in Italy) medical practices; *Western Medical Thought from Antiquity to the Middle Ages*, ed. Mirko D. Grmek, trans. Antony Shugaar (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press,

sent the delegation only after priests had consulted the Sibylline Books, oracular religious texts that were consulted in such dire medical exigencies as plague.⁴¹ The consultation of these famed books is another example of the inextricable link between religion and medicine, this one mediated through a political crisis.

An inscription from Rome in the early second century C.E. demonstrates these twin devotions – to doctors and to the well-known healing gods – of one M. Ulpius Honoratus, who offers thanks to his personal physician and to the gods of health and healing: “Marcus Ulpius Honoratus ... fulfilled his vow happily, willingly, and deservedly to Aesculapius and Hygieia, in return for his own health, that of his family, and that of his doctor, Lucius Julius Helix, who, in accordance with these gods, expertly took care of me.”⁴²

1998), 1–138; and Jaime Alvar Ezquerra, *Romanising Oriental Gods. Religions in the Greco-Roman World*, 165 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2008), 318–36.

41 For the history and use of the Sibylline Books in divination as central to Roman (and Greek) religion and politics, see Eric M. Orlin, *Temples, Religion and Politics in the Roman Republic* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1997), 76–115; H. Berneder, *Magna Mater-Kult und Sibyllinen: Kulttransfer und annalistische Geschichtsfiktion*. Innsbrucker Beiträge zur Kulturwissenschaft, Sonderheft, 119 (Innsbruck: Institut für Sprachen und Literaturen der Universität Innsbruck, 2004), 11–37; and Frederico Santangelo, *Divination, Prediction and the End of the Roman Republic* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 128–48.

42 Ido Israelowich, *Patients and Healers in the High Roman Empire* (see note 37), 46: “Aesculapio et Hygiae M. Ulpius Honoratus dec(urio) eq(uitum) sing(ularium) imp(eratoris) n(ostr) pro salute sua suorumque et L. Iuli Helicis medici, qui curam mei diligenter egit secundum deos, v(otum) s(ol)vi [sic] l(aetus) l(ibens) m(erito).” *Solvi* seems to be an error for the inscriptional standard *solvit*.

Although the *Northumberland Bestiary* is filled with medicines,⁴³ miracle-healings⁴⁴ and even curative charms,⁴⁵ physicians (*phisiici*) are invoked sparingly and never by name, and mostly to lend authority to quasi medical observations, as in this section on old age (*NB* XIII.6.2): ‘Physicians say that fools are of colder blood and that prudent men are warm-blooded. Hence old men, in whom there is now cold, and boys, in whom there is not yet warmth, are less wise’ (“Nam *phisiici* dicunt stultos homines esse frigidioris sanguinis, prudentes calidi. Unde et senes in quibus iam friget et pueri in quibus necdum calet minus sapiunt”).⁴⁶ Physicians appear in only two other passages in the *Northumberland Bestiary*, in this passage on the anatomy and physiology of the eye (*NB* XII.1.6): ‘Physicians say that for three days before, those who are going to die do not have these same pupils that we see in our eyes, and that if they are not seen, death is certain.’ (“*Phisiici* dicunt easdem pupillas quas videmus in oculis morituros ante triduum non habere. Quibus non visis certa est desperacio.”); and, in a similar context, in a discussion on the physiology of blood (*NB* XII.5.5): ‘But blood is not consist-

⁴³ E.g., (*NB* V.20) ‘The bark of the mandrake plant when immersed in wine is given as a remedy against many infirmities, ... and those put to sleep by it feel no pain’ (“*Cuius cortex in vino missa datur bibendum propter varias infirmitates, ... et soporati dolorem non senciant*”).

⁴⁴ The weasel (*NB* V.25.3) has an unusual ability to conceive through its ear and give birth through its mouth (an obvious type for the virgin birth of Jesus), and ‘those knowledgeable of medicine say that if by chance their offspring have been killed, they can bring them back to life if they find them’ (“*Dicunt enim periti medicine ita ut si forte occisi fuerint earum fetus si invenire potuerint redivivos faciant*”). On this phenomenon, see Katarzyna Urbaniak-Walczak, “*Die conceptio per aurem*”: *Untersuchungen zum Marienbild in Ägypten unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Malereien in El-Bagawat*. Arbeiten zum spätantiken und koptischen Ägypten, 2 (Altenberge: Oros Verlag, 1992); and Maurizio Bettini, *Women and Weasels: Mythologies of Birth in Ancient Greece and Rome*, trans. Emlyn Eisenach (1998; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013). Cf. *NB* VI.8, where the partridge becomes pregnant just by the scent of the male. Editor’s note: the weasel also appears in Marie de France’s *lai* “*Eliduc*,” operating in the same way, helping its dead companion to revive by means of a flower (ca. 1190).

⁴⁵ The hyena (*NB* V.10.3), for example, is considered to possess knowledge of magic: ‘This creature has a stone in its eye called the hyena stone which if pressed under the tongue engenders predictions of the future. And any animal around which a hyena has walked three times loses the ability to move. On account of this they have said that there is magical knowledge in it’ (“*Hec belua lapidem in oculis tenet nomine hyeniam quem si quis sub lingua tenuerit futura predicere credetur. Verum hyena quodcumque animal ter lustraverit se movere non potest. Quapropter magicam scienciam inesse ei pronunciaverunt*”).

⁴⁶ Cf. Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 2.13 (1389–1390), e.g., “[Elderly men] are cowardly, and are always anticipating danger; unlike that of the young, who are warm-blooded, their temperament is chilly; old age has paved the way for cowardice; fear is, in fact a form of chill,” *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, ed. Jonathan Barnes. Revised Oxford Translation, 2 (1984; Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), 2213–16.

ent except in those who are young. For physicians say that blood thins with age, for which reason old people have a tremor.' ("Sanguis autem non est integer nisi in iuvenibus. Nam dicunt phisici minui sanguinem per etatem unde in senibus tremorem.").

This restraint in attributing healing to physicians may reflect a persistent Roman view that physicians were persons of lower social ranks and that the *pater familias*, the head of the family and of the large operations of the villa and farm, was better qualified to prescribe cures and dispense medicines. Pliny the Elder (23–79 C.E.), in his formidable work the *Historia naturalis*, contains the names of over one thousand medicinal herbs or remedies and rituals of medicine that include charms, therapies and drugs.⁴⁷ He also represents a segment of society that reacted against Hellenized Greek medics and medical theories. In the eyes of the Romans, Greek slaves and freedmen formed the majority of medical practitioners and they were generally distrusted since they were hired and paid for their services. The *medicus pater familias*, on the other hand, imbued medicine with Roman agricultural religious practices, remedies rather than medical theories.⁴⁸

In the *Northumberland Bestiary*, priests rather than physicians enjoyed the same religious-medical prerogative as the Roman *pater familias*. In the "Quotiens-cumque peccator" sermon (NB IV.2.1), we read that spiritual medicine derived 'from lamentation of the heart, true confession, true penitence, and earnest work' ("cordis ploratu, vera confessione, penitencia vera, operacione recta") is the means to salvation; priests, in order to administer that spiritual medicine, had to acquire 'spiritual understanding and wisdom' ("spiritualem intellectum ... et sapienciam") for themselves. The entry on the dog (NB V.22.4) is instructive here: sometimes considered the representative of a preacher because of its 'barking for God,'⁴⁹ the dog is a type for a priest, or physician of the soul. In this allegory, a dog's habit of healing its own wounds by licking them signifies that 'when the wounds of sinners are laid bare in confession they are cleansed by the correction of priests' ("peccatorum vulnera cum in confessione nudantur sacerdotum correctione mundantur"). A dog's tongue can also heal internal organs and this,

⁴⁷ Jerry Stannard, "Medicinal Plants and Folk Remedies in Pliny, 'Historia Naturalis,'" *History and Philosophy of the Life Sciences* 4.1 (1982): 3–23.

⁴⁸ John Scarborough, *Roman Medicine* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1969), especially 18–22. Despite his misgivings, Pliny seems to have held the first-century Bithynian physician Asclepiades in high esteem. Cf. Ido Israelowich, *Patients and Healers in the High Roman Empire* (see note 37), 18–20.

⁴⁹ E.g., "magnos pro Domino latratus dederunt": 'they barked loudly for the Lord,' in *Liber testimoniorum veteris testamenti quem Paterius ex opusculis S. Gregorii excerpti curavit* 11.141, PL 79.859, ed. J.-P. Migne (Paris: Migne, 1844–1865).

according to the entry in the *Northumberland Bestiary*, signifies that ‘the secrets of the heart can be cleansed by the work and teaching of a preacher [or doctor]’ (“*secretaria cordis sepe mundantur opere et sermone doctoris*”). The dog is also a type for priests seeking to minister to the ‘care of souls’ (“*ad curam animarum*”) through preaching.⁵⁰ In the account of the dog who uses his wailing lament to convict his master’s murderer, we see a close analogy with the preacher who deploys rhetorical strategies, i.e., “barking,” to “heal” his flock:

(V.22.3) Ferunt in remocioire parte urbis quemdam
 crepusculo necatum virum qui canem sibi adiunctum haberet.
 Miles quidam predandi studio minister extiterat cedis. Tectus
 idem tenebroso diei adhuc exordio in alias partes secesserat.
 Iacebat inhumatum cadaver frequens erat spectancium vulgus.
 Astabat canis, questu lacrimabili domini deflebat erumpnam.
 Forte is qui necem intulerat—ut se habet versucia humani
 Ingenii—quo versandi in medio auctoritate presumpta fidem
 ascisceret innocencie. Ad illam circumspectantis populi accessit
 coronam et velud miserans appropinquavit ad funus. Tunc canis
 sequestrato paulisper questu doloris arma ulcionis assumpsit
 atque illum apprehensum tenuit; et velud epilogo quodam
 miserable carmen inmurmurans universos convertit in lacrimas.
 Fidemque probacioni detulit quod solum tenuit ex plurimis nec
 dimisit. Denique perturbatus ille quod tam manifestum rei
 indicium neque odii neque inimic[ic]iarum neque invidie aut
 iniurie alicuius poterat obieccione vacuare crimenque diucius
 nequivit refellere.

[(V.22.3) They say that a certain man who had his dog with him was murdered at twilight in a rather remote part of the city. A certain soldier, with a motive of robbery, had been the perpetrator of the murder. Hidden by the shadow that was just now beginning, he had withdrawn into another area. The corpse lay unburied, and there was a thick crowd looking on. The dog stood by weeping with tearful lament for the loss of its master. By chance the one who had carried out the murder came upon these who had gathered – such is the craftiness of the human mind – in order to assume authority by virtue of being in the midst of them and make them believe in his innocence. He approached that circle of onlookers and drew near to the corpse, as if he were a mourner. Then the dog put aside for a time its grievous lament, assumed the weapons of vengeance, took hold of him, and

⁵⁰ In accordance with the mandate of Lateran IV (1215), Canon 11 (Tanner 1.240) (see note 20): “The metropolitan church shall have a theologian to teach scripture to priests and others and, especially, to instruct them in matters which are recognized as pertaining to the care of souls” (*quae ad curam animarum spectare noscuntur*).

held him; *and murmuring a wretched song, as in some final plea,* turned everyone to tears. The fact that it held him alone from among so many and would not release him gave credence to the testimony. Finally, he was confounded because he was not able to invalidate such evident proof and because he could not clear himself by alleging that it was someone's hatred, enmity, envy, or injury, and he could not refute the charge any longer (112–13).]

Ambrose, in his *Hexaemeron* (6.4.23), recounts this story about the dog but makes explicit the rhetorical analogy: instead of “murmuring a wretched song as if in some final plea,” he writes “raising a pitiful cry after the manner of an epilogue in a speech.” Extending the analogy between dogs and preachers, he writes elsewhere (6.4.17): “To dogs, therefore, is given the ability to bark in defense of their masters … Thus you should learn to use your voice for the sake of Christ.”⁵¹ At the end of the entry on the dog in the *Northumberland Bestiary*, a famous Aesopean lesson is allegorized and once again the dog is likened to a preacher who employs rhetorical strategies to preserve the souls of Christians in a state of “health” that will heal their souls. According to this canine anecdote, if a dog sees its reflection while it is swimming across a river carrying food, it opens its mouth to bite at the food it sees in its reflection and thereby loses what it was carrying.⁵²

(V.22.4) Cuius figuram in quibusdam rebus predicatores
habent qui semper admonendo ac exercendo que recta sunt
insidias diaboli propellunt, ne thesaurum Dei id est animas
Christianorum rapiendo ipse auferat.

[(V.22.4) This is the type for preachers in certain ways: they dispel the plots of the devil by constantly preaching and practicing the things that are right so that he cannot seize and take away the treasure of God, that is the souls of Christians (114–15).]

The *Northumberland Bestiary* reflects the twin refrain of the Greco-Roman healing tradition – that of the healing physician, likened to the god Asclepius, and that of the *pater familias*, likened to the priest or preacher who hears confessions to administer spiritual (and thereby physical) cures. But there is a third kind of phy-

51 *Saint Ambrose. Hexaemeron*, trans. John Savage (see note 32), 236. Editor’s note: the same motif appears many times in medieval literature, such as in Elisabeth von Nassau-Saarbrücken’s *Königin Sibille* (1437), a translation from a French source. The religious message, however, is not clearly recognizable there.

52 A common literary trope, cf. Aesop, Fable 133, in *Aesopica*, ed. Ben E. Perry (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1952), 372–73.

sician in the ancient world who also contributes to the depiction of the priest in the *Northumberland Bestiary* as a physician of souls whose words can affect the philosophical outlook consonant with a healthy soul.

Galen

If, as Pliny suggests, foreign medical practitioners were generally reviled,⁵³ the Greek philosopher-physician was of a different order. Galen (129–ca. 216 C.E.), the well-known Pergamene physician of antiquity, served in the court of Marcus Aurelius, who called him (according to his semi-autobiographical treatise *De praenotione ad Epigenem*, ‘On Prognosis’) “a very enlightened gentleman ... first among physicians and unique among philosophers.”⁵⁴ Galen interpreted the logic required for medical deductions and the philosophical and ethical precepts found in Hippocrates to argue that physicians were well prepared to be philosophers.⁵⁵ His treatise called ‘The Best Doctor Should Also Be A Philosopher’ (*Quod optimus medicus sit quoque philosophus*) demonstrates by its very title the inextricable bonds between body and mind that are necessary to promote good health.⁵⁶

Galen does not limit “philosophy” to an understanding of theoretical arguments essential for deductive reasoning, though he does apply this methodol-

⁵³ Ralph M. Rosen, “Spaces of Sickness in Greco-Roman Medicine,” *Medicine and Space: Body Surroundings and Borders in Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, ed. Patricia A. Baker, Han Nijdam, and Karine van ‘t Land (Leiden and Boston: E. J. Brill, 2012), 227–44, argues that instead of a philanthropic act of healing, a doctor’s visit to a patient was widely viewed as an opportunity for venal profit.

⁵⁴ For the most recent biography of Galen, see Véronique Boudon-Millot, *Galen*, vol. 1 (Paris: Le Belles Lettres, 2007), vii–xc, especially xi–xviii and lxxvii–lxxx for his dates. A more general overview is in Vivian Nutton, *Ancient Medicine* (see note 40), 222–35 with n. 1, 320; for an excellent digest of his afterlife, see Vivian Nutton, “The Fortunes of Galen,” *The Cambridge Companion to Galen*, ed. R. J. Hankinson (New York: Cambridge, 2008), 355–90. The full citation for this quote is found in *De praecognitione ad Epigenem* 14.660, Vivian Nutton, *Galen, On prognosis: Edition, Translation, and Commentary*. Corpus Medicorum Graecorum, 8.1 (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1979), 11.8, 129. Galen also writes that as a consequence of his success in treating many leading Romans, “his reputation stood high among all ... and great was the name of Galen” (95).

⁵⁵ On Galen as emulator of Hippocrates’s ideas about the physician-philosopher, see Owsei Temkin, *Hippocrates in a World of Pagans and Christians* (see note 7), especially ch. 5: “Galen’s Ideal Philosopher,” 47–50.

⁵⁶ The Greek text with French translation and commentary is in Véronique Boudon-Millot, *Galen* (see note 54), 283–314. For the English, see P. N. Singer, *Galen: Selected Works* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 30–34.

ogy to his medicine; instead, he advocates moderation in ethical and physical dimensions in a holistic view of health that anticipates Christian teachings.⁵⁷ He ministered to those in need and sought to alleviate suffering, and his monotheism was compatible with Platonic and Aristotelian ideas about nature. He is a direct heir to, and faithful adherent of, the Hippocratean definition of the art of medicine: “First, I will define what I think medicine to be – totally to do away with the sufferings of the sick, to lessen the virulence of their diseases, and to refuse to treat those overcome by their diseases, knowing that in all these things medicine prevails.”⁵⁸

For Galen, a physician was a practicing philosopher rather than one devoted to contemplation. And his theories had to be empirically testable. Certain animals in the *Northumberland Bestiary* also partake of the perceptive rhetorical reasoning that underpins Galen’s medical diagnoses: the dog (NB V.22.2) that sniffs the air at a crossroad to determine ‘as though it were a syllogistic proposition’ (“velud

57 Christian benevolence toward Christians and also non-Christians was well-known. The emperor Julian, who was devoted to the healing god Asclepius, exhorts his pagan priests to imitate Christians in their charity. See *Julian the Apostate, Letters*, trans. W. C. Wright. Loeb Classical Library, 157 (New York: Macmillan, 1913–1923), *Epistle 22*, 66–73: “Why do we not observe that it is their benevolence to strangers, their care for the graves of the dead and the pretended holiness of their lives that have done most to increase atheism” (68–69)? A study of several aspects of the development of social welfare from the Christian perspective is found in Carter Lindberg and Emily Albu Hanawalt, *Through the Eye of a Needle: Judeo-Christian Roots of Social Welfare* (Kirksville, MO: Thomas Jefferson University Press, 1994), especially ch. 2, Howard Clark Kee, “Rich and Poor in the New Testament and in Early Christianity,” 29–42; for the period of what he calls the “end of the ancient world,” see Peter Brown, *Through the Eye of a Needle: Wealth, the Fall of Rome, and the Making of Christianity in the West, 350–550 AD* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012).

58 *On the Art of Medicine* (*Περὶ Τέχνης*) 3.2 (my translation). For text, translation, and commentary, see Joel E. Mann, *Hippocrates: On the Art of Medicine* (see note 36). Cf. Lactantius (ca. 250–325), *Divine Institutes* 6.12, who acknowledges that the kind of Christian justice of which he writes is the same as that about which philosophers speak: “To undertake the care and support of the sick, who need someone to assist them, is part of the greatest kindness, and of great beneficence; and he who shall do this will both gain a living sacrifice to God, and that which he has given to another for a time he will himself receive from God for eternity ... Mercy has a great reward; for God promises it, that He will remit all sins.” For the Latin, see *Lucius Caelius Firmianus: Divinarum institutionum libri septem, Divinarum institutionum liber sextus*, ed. Eberhard Heck and Antonie Wlosok (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2009); for the English, see Lactantius: *Divine Institutes*, ed. and trans., Anthony Bowen and Peter Garnsey (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2004), 336–37. The text, translated by William Fletcher, Ante-Nicene Fathers, 7, was revised and edited for the New Advent site by Kevin Knight: <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/07016.htm> (last accessed on Dec. 31, 2015).

sillogisticam”),⁵⁹ which way to go, and the ant (*NB* V.27.1), also by smell, senses ‘whether a crop is of barley or wheat’ (“an ordei sit spica an tritici”) and wisely chooses wheat, and then (V.27.3) protects its grain by its ability ‘to predict good weather’ (“explorare serenitatis tempora”). Just as the author/s of the *Northumberland Bestiary*, Galen understood the universe to have been created and under the control of a supreme intelligence, providential, unknowable, and benevolent – God, or perhaps God as Nature was the teleological view they shared.⁶⁰ The causal structure of the natural world as it was set out in the prefatory material and taxonomy of the *Northumberland Bestiary* is a view that permeates Galen’s medical texts. Both are predicated upon the confluence of flesh and spirit in the soul and the enmeshed links between medicine and divine cosmology.⁶¹ Just as all parts of the body contribute to its health, the body contributes to the good functioning of creation. And a supreme intelligent creator, alternatively referred to by the feminine ἡ φύσις ('nature') or masculine ὁ δημιουργός ('demiurge'), unknown and unknowable, is at the helm: “Who could be so stupid,” he asks,

59 Richard Sorabji, *Animal Minds and Human Morals: Origins of the Western Debate* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993), 20–29 and n. 29, analyzes the implications of the dog’s perception in the context of a larger discussion of animal rights in the history of Western philosophy. For an interesting related study on the moral virtue of animals with reference to cognitive ethology, see Jean-François Lhermitte, *L’animal vertueux dans la philosophie antique à l’époque impériale*. Kaïnon – Anthropologie de la pensée ancienne, 2 (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2015).

60 Galen’s supreme creator is discussed in Rebecca Fleming, “Demiurge and Emperor in Galen’s World of Knowledge,” *Galen and the World of Knowledge*, ed. C. Gill, T. Whitmarsh and J. Wilkin (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 59–84.

61 Galen’s remarks about the soul offer no definitive view, e.g., in his *De foetuum formatione* 6, in Diethard Nickel, *Galen: Über die Ausformung der Leimlinge*. Corpus Medicorum Graeorum, 5.3.3 (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 2001), 104–06, 90–94; for the English, see Peter N. Singer, *The Construction of the Embryo* (see note 55), 177–201: “When I hear some philosophers assert that matter has been endowed with soul from eternity, and that by contemplation of the Ideas it forms or adorns itself, I realize all the more strongly that there must be only one soul, which both constructs us and continues to employ each of the parts” (6.697, 199). Later, in the same work, Galen writes: “... I have nowhere presumed to declare the identity of the substance of the soul. Even whether it is entirely incorporeal, whether it is something bodily, whether it is entirely invisible, or whether perishable” (6.701, 201). Pierluigi Donini traces Galen’s inconclusive views on the soul and its natures in his chapter, “Psychology,” *The Cambridge Companion to Galen*, ed. R. J. Hankinson (see note 54), 184–209; and Heidi Marx-Wolff analyzes competing views of the soul entering the embryo in late antique philosophical/medical texts in her chapter, “Medicine,” *Late Ancient Knowing*, ed. Catherine M. Chin and Moulie Vidas (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2015), 80–98.

“or could there be anyone so hostile and antagonistic to the works of Nature as not to recognize immediately... the skill of the Creator?”⁶²

This view is reflected in his entire approach to medicine as more than the sum of its parts, instead, a holistic physiologic medicine. Galenic medicine, and the Galenism that held sway for a thousand years after him, was rooted in the same interdependence of body and soul or matter and spirit that informs the Christian moral teaching in many bestiaries. In the colorful literary *Northumberland Bestiary*, as in Galen’s discourse, philosophy, medicine, rhetoric and religion converge. Animal behaviors metaphorically represent human behaviors as the natural world metaphorically reflects the divine cosmology. A comparison of the view of creation in the *Northumberland Bestiary* with Galen’s view above reveals the argument from design at the core of each⁶³:

(I.1.2) Creacio mundi quinque modis scribitur. Uno quo
ante tempora secularia universitas mundi in mente divina
concepitur, que concepcion archetipus mundus dicitur...
Secundo, cum ad exemplar archetipi hic sensibilis mundus
in materia creatur sicut legitur, Qui manet in eternum creavit
omnia simul. Tercio, cum per species et formas vi diebus hic
mundus formatur, sicut scribitur, Sex diebus fecit Deus opera
sua bona valde. Quarto, cum unum ab alio, ut puta, homo ab
homine, pecus a pecude, arbor ab arbore, unum quodque de
semine sui generis nascitur ...

[(I.1.2) The creation of the world is described in five ways:
the first is that the universe is conceived in the divine mind
before worldly time, a conception called the archetypal world...
The second is when this sensible world is created in matter
according to the example of the archetype, as we read, *He who*

62 *On the Usefulness of the Parts of the Body*, Epode (Book 17), translated in Margaret Tallmadge May, *Galen on the Usefulness of the Parts of the Body*, 2 vols. Cornell Publications in the History of Science (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1968), 2.729–30; cf. 1.189: “But to have discovered how everything should best be ordered is the height of wisdom, and to have accomplished his will in all things is proof of his invincible power;” or, 1.332: “From this it is at once manifest that Nature has constructed everything with foresight...”

63 Armelle Debru, “Physiology,” *The Cambridge Companion to Galen*, ed. R. J. Hankinson (see note 54), 263–82, addresses Galen’s teleological view, which, he demonstrates, is manifest in “his profound faith in Nature and its Creator” (281). See also *Galen: Psychological Writings*, ed. P. N. Singer (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), especially the first translation and commentary in English of the recently (2005) discovered *Avoiding Distress*, 45–99, for Galen’s interest in the interaction of mind and body (something that was not universally accepted) in stress-related illnesses.

*remains unto eternity has created all things together.*⁶⁴ The third is when this world is formed in all its aspects and its forms in six days, as it is written, *In six days God made his works exceedingly good.*⁶⁵ The fourth is when one thing is born from another, as, for example, man from man, beast from beast, tree from tree, each one from a seed of its own kind ... (50–51).]

For the physician Galen, just as for the Christian author(s) and readers of the *Northumberland Bestiary*, all elements cooperate under Nature. Moreover, Galen's works were revered in the Muslim world as in Western Europe and numerous copies were recovered for the West through Syrian, Arabic, and Hebrew translations.⁶⁶ Galen did not debate the world views of the ancient philosophical sects (Stoic, Platonist, Aristotelian, Epicurean, *et al.*) but applied medical treatments within a world view circumscribed by a divine creator in an intentional world order.⁶⁷ Each part of the body had a function within the whole – body and mind/soul – just as each person in the universe had a function in the plan of the divine creator. For Galen, a patient's mental state, that is, the condition of his soul, was an important predictor of the success of any medical treatment.

Just as it was within the purview of the physician to minister to the complex union of physical and mental ailments, including in the arenas of moral philosophy, so it was for men of the church to minister to the physical, moral or spiritual ailments through preaching. And the texts and images in the *Northumberland Bestiary* provided an ideal source for curative and didactic sermons.⁶⁸ Galen advised that it was the moral duty of the virtuous [physician] to reform his own soul and then the souls of others, to teach by precepts and by acting as a role-model in his own life.⁶⁹ In his *De doctrina Christiana*, a treatise on instruction through preaching, Augustine reminds his readers, that a preacher, the soul's physician, ought to live as an example for all to follow, and before he speaks,

64 Sir 18.1; Rv 10.6.

65 Gn 1.31.

66 Gotthard Strohmaier, "Reception and Tradition: Medicine in the Byzantine and Arab World," *Western Medical Thought from Antiquity to the Middle Ages*, ed. Mirko D. Grmek, trans. Antony Shugaar (see note 40), 139–69.

67 Vivian Nutton, *Ancient Medicine* (see note 40), 227–29.

68 According to Mary Carruthers, bestiaries were types of memory-books, whose "pictures" of animals invited readers to remember particular segments of the entry. She argues that bestiaries were among the *puerilia* of medieval education and were designed for young learners as elementary mnemotechnical tools. See *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 122–29, for the full discussion.

69 *Character Traits* 2.23, *Galen: Psychological Writings*, ed. P. N. Singer (see note 63), 156.

pray to be filled with what he is about to preach/teach.⁷⁰ Stories in the *Northumberland Bestiary* sought to inspire the same action in the Christian man who was to act as a minister of God. He was enjoined first to take for himself the cleanest spiritual fruits and avoid the deadly foods of the flesh. An apt illustration is the entry on the ibis (NB VI.27.1–2), unclean before all birds because it feeds on rotting carcasses. Shunning the pure deep waters where clean fish dwell, this bird hugs the shores of rivers and stagnant beaches day and night, waiting for small dead fish or some putrid and decayed carcass to wash up. Here is the allegory that follows its description:

(VI.27.2) Tu vero Christiane homo qui ex aqua et Spiritu
 Sancto iam renatus es, ingredere ad intelligibiles et spirituales
 aquas, id est in altitudinem ministeriorum Dei. Et inde sume
 tibi spirituales et mundissimos cibos quos enumerat Apostolus
 dicens, *Fructus autem spiritus est caritas, gaudium, pax,*
paciencia, fides, modestia, castitas. *Quod si nolueris in alcioribus*
aquis ingredi et de ipsis spirituales escas tibi capere et sumere set
circuiens deforis et oberrans, mortuis et fetidissimis cadaveribus
saginaris. *De quibus dicit Apostolus, Manifesta sunt opera*
carnis, que sunt fornicacio, inmundicia, luxuria, idolatria,
ebrietates, avaricia, cupiditas. *Hee sunt carnales et mortifere*
esce quibus infelices anime nutriuntur ad penam.

[(VI.27.2) But you, O Christian man, who have already been reborn from water and the Holy Spirit, enter the intelligible and spiritual waters, that is, into the depth of the ministries of God and from there take up for yourself the cleanest spiritual foods, which the Apostle enumerates saying, *The fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, faith, modesty, and chastity.*⁷¹ But if you refuse to go into the deeper waters to take and eat for yourself spiritual food from them but are wandering on the outside and circling around, then you are stuffing yourself with rotten and most putrid carcasses. Of these things the Apostle says, *The works of the flesh are manifest: they are fornication, impurity, luxury, idolatry, drunkenness, avarice, and cupidity.*⁷² These are deadly foods of the flesh by which unhappy souls are nourished for punishment (198–99).]

70 4.15, see R. P. H. Green, *Augustine: De Doctrina Christiana*. Oxford Early Christian Texts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 235.

71 Gal 5.22–23.

72 Gal 5.19–21.

According to Davis Harley, the link between rhetoric and healing, a link that forms the premise of many entries in the *Northumberland Bestiary*, is a psychological therapy that relies for its “therapeutic bond” on the persuasive and confident rhetoric of the physician. Preaching as the healing remedy in the *Northumberland Bestiary* and the preacher, a physician who delivers his medicine in a sermon, anticipates Harley’s biopsychosocial model.⁷³ When the panther (*NB* V.18.1) emits a great bellowing roar from its mouth, accompanied by a sweet odor, all animals except the devil follow the sweet smell toward virtue, as though following the voice of Jesus Christ. The *Northumberland Bestiary* implicitly compares the belch of the panther and the voice of Jesus in concluding the entry with a reference to Psalm 119.103, where God’s words, instructions, and precepts are sweet to his congregants (*NB* V.18.3): ‘How sweet your words are to my throat, more than honey and the honeycomb in my mouth’ (“Quam dulcia faucibus meis eloquia tua super mel et favum ori meo”). The dove (*NB* VI.31) also shares characteristics with Galen’s physician. The dove as a similitude for the preacher is a role model: ‘Just as preachers, doves lack anger and bitterness’ (“Ita predicatores carent ira et amaritudine”); and ‘doves choose finer grains, just as preachers choose finer excerpts from Scripture ... So preachers, by their preaching, nurture the sons of this world likewise alienated by sin, drawing them to Christ’ (“Meliora grana eligit eodem modo ipsi meliores sentencias de Scripturis eligunt ... Ita predicatores filios huius seculi alienatos adeo per peccatum suis predicacionibus nutriti eos trahentes ad Christum”). The rhetorical engagement through preaching is at the heart of the healing process.

A third parallel in the practice of Galenic medicine and in the medical analogy in the *Northumberland Bestiary* is in trusting the diagnosis to result in an accurate prognosis. If the physician examined the patient and determined the causes of the malady, the remedy was assured, unless the patient misrepresented the disease or did not follow the prescribed regimen. In the *Northumberland Bestiary*, confession afforded an opportunity to diagnose a spiritual illness. The confessor, like the physician, tailored his treatment to the diagnosis but unless the patient followed the regimen of the cure, the hoped for outcome could not be assured:

(IV.3) Quapropter, karissimi, mente integra, fide firma, virtute robusta, caritate perfecta, parati ad omnem voluntatem Dei simus, conservantes fortiter dominica mandata: in simplicitate innocenciam, in caritate concordiam, modestiam in humilitate,

⁷³ David Harley, “Rhetoric and the Social Construction of Sickness and Healing,” *Social History of Medicine* 12.3 (1999): 407–35, especially 423–26, e.g., “A recognition of the centrality of narrative and rhetoric clarifies many aspects of psychological healing” (426).

diligenciam in administracione, vigilanciam in adiuvandis
laborantibus, misericordiam in fovendis pauperibus, in
defendenda caritate constanciam, in discipline severitate
censuram.

[(IV.3) Therefore, dearest ones, let us be prepared to do God's
every will with sound mind, firm faith, strong virtue, and perfect
charity, keeping the Lord's commandments with fortitude:
innocence in simplicity, harmony in charity, modesty in humility,
diligence in ministry, vigilance in aiding the suffering, pity in
caring for the poor, constancy in defending charity, and rigor
in the severity of discipline (66–67).]

The sense that the physician was infallible if he followed the logic necessary to diagnose an illness accurately anticipates the power of faith in the *Northumberland Bestiary*; prayer in the face of sin had the power to achieve God's pardon and thereby restore the health of the soul. When a man is confronted by a wolf, which here (NB V.21.2) represents the devil 'who always envies the human race, and who continually goes around the sheepfolds of the faithful of the Church, so that he may afflict their souls and cause them to perish' ("qui semper humano generi invidet ac iugiter circuit caulas ecclesie fidelium ut mactet et perdat eorum animas"), the man should remove his cloths and then strike two stones together in his hands. By the stones, we understand the saints of God who already rule in heaven with God and to whom we then must pray so that they may (NB V.21.3) 'strike the ears of the judge and obtain pardon for our crimes' ("ut et ipsi aures pulsent iudicis ac veniam nobis impetrent"). Here, faith in the efficacy of prayer to heal an errant soul mirrors the trust in medical diagnosis to ensure a cure.

Galen's view of the natural world with a divine creator at its source is a view shared by the *Northumberland Bestiary*, and this view adumbrates the tacit duality of all medical treatments: physical cures are conjoined with the health of the soul. An allegorical understanding of the natural world presupposes the efficacy of rhetoric in interpreting and translating the divine world it reflects. Rhetoric is also at the heart of medical diagnosis and therapy; Galenic physicians used rhetoric and philosophy to diagnose, treat, and heal. In analytical symmetry, preachers and priests, the physicians of souls, employ confession, prayer and instruction in the *Northumberland Bestiary* to effect spiritual cures.

Healing Shrines

Less paradigmatically than the large corpora of Hippocrates and Galen, the contemporaneous tales of the second century orator Aelius Aristides (117-ca. 177) also demonstrated a theory of medicine in which rhetoric and religious healing functioned in harmonious symbiosis. Aristides's religious devotion to Asclepius and other gods did not preclude his seeking and following the advice of medical physicians.⁷⁴ As in the writings of Hippocrates and Galen there was no antagonism between sacred and secular in healing practices, more a recognition of their mutual dependence. When physicians failed, the divine prevailed, as Aristides often asserts: "I am alive, having escaped at different times through various kinds of consolation and advice on the part of the god [i.e., Asclepius] from things which no doctor knew what to call, to say nothing of cure, nor had seen befall the nature of man (*Or.* 2.67)."⁷⁵

The holistic view of medicine in the *Northumberland Bestiary* includes physical and mental health, whether through religious or philosophical processes, and it encompassed a taxonomy of the natural world that had at its head a benevolent God. Such an understanding of the physical world as a mystical reflection of the divine also characterizes Aristides's texts. The wondrous accounts of his medical vicissitudes and his redemption and salvation by Asclepius are evident in his *Iepoi Lóyoi* (*Hieroī Logoi*) or *Sacred Tales*, published in 175 C.E. The title itself was inspired by the most famous pagan healing god Asclepius (*Or.* 48.9). These tales form part of the continuum of texts in which sacred and secular medicines intersect, extending from the Hippocratic corpus through many medieval bestiaries.⁷⁶ Detailing his dreams from the god of medicine Asclepius about illnesses and cures, his travels to healing shrines, including long residences in the Pergamene Asclepieion, and his treatment at the hands of physicians, they also include non-medicinal topics, such as his literary career.⁷⁷ Part autobiography and part eulogy, written in response to his dreams from Asclepius, the tales

74 Cf. Sirach 38.12–15.

75 Oration II: To Plato: *In Defense of Oratory*, 1.88, C. A. Behr, *P. Aelius Aristides: The Complete Works*, 2 vols. (1981; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1986).

76 The "Sacred Tales" are the final surviving orations, numbered 47–52 in C. A. Behr, *P. Aelii Aristidis Opera Quae Extant Omnia* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1976). On the tales, see C. A. Behr, *Aelius Aristides and the Sacred Tales* (Amsterdam: A. M. Hakkert, 1968) with English translations on 205–92, revised in C. A. Behr, *P. Aelius Aristides: The Complete Works* (see note 75), 2.278–353.

77 Ido Israelowich, *Society, Medicine and Religion in the Sacred Tales of Aelius Aristides*. Mnemosyne Supplements, 341 (Leiden and Boston: E. J. Brill, 2012), 22, cites this segment of *Oration* 42: "For I have received, O lord Asclepius, as I have said before, many, various gifts from you and

have been difficult to assign to any genre familiar in ancient literature. Apart from relaying his dreams, the tales also are filled with accounts of his prescriptions, from both Asclepius as well as his doctors. Given conflicting advice, however, Aristides always followed the commands of the god, acknowledging the inherent relationship in Greco-Roman medicine between transgression and purification in the healing process:

These dreams appeared to me while the doctor had arrived
and had prepared himself to help as much as he knew how.
But when he heard the dreams, being a sensible man, he also
yielded to the god. And we recognized the true and proper
doctor for us, and we did what he commanded.⁷⁸

In the accounts of Aristides as in the field of Greco-Roman medicine more generally, it was immoderation that resulted in illness. In the *Northumberland Bestiary*, when immoderate passions cause someone to sin, the miracle of God's intervention through Christian instruction could still ensure the salvation of the patient. Here the appetite of the crab (NB VII.17.1–2) is the type for someone unable to control his passion and who in transgression of God's law requires divine healing: Crabs hunt oysters whose flesh is enclosed in strong shells. The only way for a crab to remove the food is by its guile: following the oyster to its remote hide-away, the crab waits until the oyster unlocks its half-shells to bask in the fresh air and sunlight and then furtively tosses a pebble into its shell to keep it from closing. Since the shell is locked open, the crab can feed on its insides. Crabs are compared to vicious men who trick each other and feed upon the misfortune of others; they are counseled to be content with what is theirs:

(VII.17.2) Bonus cibus est simplicitas innocencie. Sua bona
habens insidiari nescit alienis, nec avaricie facibus inardescit
cui lucrum omne ad virtutem dispendium est ad cupiditatem
incendium... Utamur ergo ingenio ad querendam graciam et
salutem tuendam, non ad alienam circumscribendam innocenciam.
Licet nobis uti exemplis maritimis ad profectum nostre salutis non
ad alienae periculum.

your generosity, but the greatest, the one deserving most gratitude, and nearly, one might say, the most becoming is oratory.”

⁷⁸ *Or. 1.57*, C. A. Behr, *Aelius Aristides and the Sacred Tales* (see note 76), 218. Cf. *Or. 2.5*, 224: “When I was brought from Italy, I had contracted by ill luck many varied ailments from constant sickness and the stormy weather which I experienced while departing through Thrace and Macedonia, for I left home while I was still sick. The doctors were wholly at a loss, not only as how to help, but even to recognize what the whole thing was.”

[(VII.17.2) The simplicity of innocence is good food; one who has his own goods does not know how to plot for another's; nor does he burn with the torch of avarice to whom every gain is a loss for virtue, an incentive for greed ... So let us use our cleverness for seeking grace and looking to our salvation, not for duping the innocence of another; we should use the marine examples for the perfection of our salvation, not for the danger of another's salvation (242–43).]

Galen and Aristides were contemporaries, well-educated and public figures who used rhetoric and philosophical methods in public displays, one to “perform” anatomical medical instruction and the other to perform literary orations. The same argument from design that defines the medieval view of creation in the *Northumberland Bestiary* is also the premise of their texts: natural phenomena were subordinated to theology; and the natural world was conceived through the prism of religious faith. The *Physiologus*, which is jettisoned into the spotlight in the same general period, operates under a similar premise and Christian perspective. In the *Physiologus*, all diseases were caused directly or indirectly by the Fall, and God was the healer of physical as well as spiritual ills. For Aristides, as in the Greco-Roman medical texts and the *Physiologus*, the same God or gods who sent healing messages in dreams or oracles at sanctuaries also advised the physicians who practiced medicine.⁷⁹ Divine cures and human practices were complementary rather than competing, and divine and human healing could be invoked at will and used at an individual’s discretion. Some doctors even established priesthoods or endowed temples in honor of healing gods, though the same healing gods were at times believed to have transmitted the illness in the first place.⁸⁰ In the New Testament, another seminal source for the medical imagery in bestiaries, Jesus is portrayed as a healer of men in ways that attempt to claim prerogatives of Aristides’s great pagan healing god Asclepius.

⁷⁹ On Asclepius as both god and healer, see Georgia Petridou, “Asclepius the Divine Healer, Asclepius the Divine Physician: Epiphanies as Diagnostic and Therapeutic Tools,” *Medicine and Healing in the Ancient Mediterranean*, ed. Demetrios Michaelides (Philadelphia, PA: Oxbow, 2014), 297–307.

⁸⁰ Vivian Nutton, *Ancient Medicine* (see note 40), 290–92, catalogs examples of illness and divine displeasure from Homer through Zosimos, a contemporary and friend of Aristides, which are characterized as “offenses against the gods” (291).

Christian Healing

The New Testament emphasizes the power of Jesus and his apostles to cure diseases, even if Jesus is not called a “physician” and does not insist on a distinction between miracles and medicinal remedies. Yet from the period of the gospels through the fourth century, stories about healing *miracles* and Jesus as physician healer were central to the Christian message. The Christian healing on offer was accessible to all and was simple: Christianity was a medicine of prayer and anointing, ascetic regimens or healing by touch. As in the sources outlined above, God was the author of all salubrious treatments in creation; God also endowed physicians with the wisdom to use nature’s herbs and therapies.⁸¹

Like the pagan divine physician Asclepius, Jesus could also heal without medicine, in unknown and miraculous ways. So, too, could his apostles. Jesus and his apostles raised the dead and healed multitudes. Frequent miracles in the gospels attest to the importance of physical healing for the body, yet miracles also offer striking testimony to the superior effectiveness of religious over secular healing.⁸² In the New Testament, illnesses in general were a consequence of the cosmic transgression, but specific causes of illnesses could be ambiguous.

At times, illness seemed a consequence of sin, as in John 5.14, when Jesus admonishes the cripple he has healed to sin no more so that nothing worse may happen to him; in other instances, healing miracles are justifications in themselves, bestowed by God to make manifest his works, not inflicted because of any sin, as in John 9.1–3⁸³:

As he passed by he saw a man blind from birth. His disciplines asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, his man or his parents, that he was born blind?” Jesus answered, “Neither he nor his parents sinned; it is so that the works of God might be made visible through him”
When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and

81 There are several Old Testament examples, e.g., Jeremiah 8.22, where physicians and divine healing/healers were not distinct.

82 Jürgen Helm, “Sickness in Early Christian Healing Narratives,” *From Athens to Jerusalem: Medicine in Hellenized Jewish Lore and in Early Christian Literature*, ed. Vivian Nutton (Rotterdam: Erasmus, 2000), 241–58, argues that diseases in the New Testament are vague as are the techniques of healing, which is accomplished without remedies or herbs but by word or touch.

83 On natural and supernatural disease causalities, see Darrel W. Amundsen and Gary B. Ferngren, “The Perception of Disease and Disease Causality in the New Testament,” *Rise and Decline of the Roman World. Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* (ANRW), ed. Wolfgang Hasse, 37.3 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1996), 2934–56.

made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with clay ... and he came seeing.

Disease could also be a form of divine retribution, though this bias is more evident in biblical and later Christian sources than in the accounts of medical healings at the sanctuaries of Asclepius. The links so evident in the *Northumberland Bestiary* between transgression and illness on the one hand, and religion and salvation on the other, had already been well established in the biblical tradition.⁸⁴ Predominate is the view that good health or its restoration after illness inhere in the power of God.⁸⁵ And even though in a God-fearing man such as Job affliction *could* be the result of divine retribution,⁸⁶ illness is more commonly punishment for transgression. In Deuteronomy (28.58–61), the transgression is against the law of God, and the punishment is annihilation:

If you are not careful to observe every word of the law which is written in this book, and to revere the glorious and awesome name of the Lord, your God, he will smite you and your descendants with severe and constant blows, malignant and lasting maladies. He will again afflict you with all the diseases of Egypt which you dread, and they will persist among you. Should there be any kind of sickness or calamity not mentioned in this book of the law, that too the Lord will bring upon you until you are destroyed.

⁸⁴ Bryon Grigsby in his chapter “Medical Misconceptions,” *Misconceptions about the Middle Ages*, ed. Stephen J. Harris and Bryon L. Grigsby (New York: Routledge, 2008), 142–50, points to the medieval connection between illness and morality in literary texts and in such adjectives as sanguine, choleric, phlegmatic, and melancholic, which may relate to both emotional and moral illnesses (146).

⁸⁵ In a sermon on Jeremiah (*Homily* 14.1–5), Origen calls the prophets “physicians of souls” and draws an extended analogy between the prophets who preach and physicians who cure illnesses, even calling the words of the prophet an offer to lend those in need “spiritual money.” For the English, see *The Pastor: Readings from the Patristic Period*, ed. Philip L. Culbertson and Arthur Bradford Shippee (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1990), 39–43, with other similar examples, e.g., Gregory the Great, who addresses those called to pastoral duties as “physicians of the heart” (197).

⁸⁶ Job 1, 2.1–10. Cf. the Lord’s justification in response to Job, cc. 38–39, which demonstrates his unassailable might using examples from the creation of the world and the nature of animals, which are also, incidentally, the first two sections of the *Northumberland Bestiary*.

In the *Northumberland Bestiary*, harassment by the devil or the punishments of hell are the inevitable consequences of transgression for anyone who refuses to be converted by the healing words of the text. The wolf (*NB* V.21.2) is likened to the devil who persecutes ‘in every possible way those who withdraw from him by engaging in good works’ (“illos autem omnino insequitur qui bonis operibus ab eo elongavit”), ‘just as we read of the blessed Job from whom he took away his entire substance, even his sons and daughters, so that his heart might withdraw from God’ (“sicut de beato Iob legitur cui omnem substanciam nec non et filios et filias abstulit, ut a Domino recederet cor eius”). In the story of the dove (*NB* VI.315), we learn that the devil waits to ambush any bird who flies away from the haven of a salubrious tree in certain parts of the east, which can keep the devil at bay even by its shadow. But if any of the doves even slightly separates from the flock and the tree or its shadow, likened to the Son of God and the Holy Spirit, a game of cat and mouse ensues until the devil catches and devours it. Men of God are thus warned to stay safe in the tree (*NB* VI.31.6): ‘dwell there and persevere there, in the one faith of the Father and Son and Holy Spirit and in one Catholic Church’ (“et ibi te contine ibi habita ibi persevera in una fide Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti et in una Catholica”). Transgression in the form of separation from the faith must be avoided, at the risk of falling into the devil’s snares (*NB* VI.31.6): ‘Therefore be as careful as you can that you are not found outside of this house, and that the dragon, the ancient serpent, does not seize you and devour you, just as Judas who, as soon as he went outside, away from the Lord and his brother apostles, was immediately devoured by the devil and perished’ (“Cave ergo quantum potes ne extra hanc domum foris inveniaris et comprehendat te ille draco serpens antiquus et devoret te sicut Iudam qui mox ut exivit foris a Domino et fratribus suis apostolis statim a diabolo devoratus est et periit”). The sawfish (*NB* VII.2.1–2.), an immense beast of the sea is also a type for sinners who will suffer the punishment of hell for transgressing God’s commandments. This fish weakens and is carried back to shore when it tries to sail with ships into the open sea. Like sinners who initially begin good works but are subsequently conquered by vice, their sins (*NB* VII.2.2.), ‘like fluctuating waves, plunge them all the way to hell’ (“tanquam fluctuantes maris unde mergunt usque ad inferos”).

In the Bible, *Christus medicus* healed the blind, paralytics, lepers, and those with mental illnesses, but he was not averse to physicians or medicine. In this, Christianity was responsive to popular healing stories, sites, and rituals in the Greco-Roman religious traditions, especially those connected to the god Asclepius. But, unlike the various Greco-Roman healing gods, Jesus was always a physician of bodily *and* spiritual ills. In Mark 5.25–34 and Luke 8.46, after all other medics and medicine had failed to heal the woman with a flow of blood, she appealed to Jesus. For twelve years, she had suffered greatly at the hands of many doctors

and had spent all that she had, but she only grew worse.⁸⁷ When she touched the cloak of Jesus in good faith, she was healed. Repentance and faith are elsewhere essential to healing, as in the *Epistle to James* 5.16: “Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.”⁸⁸ Yet miraculous healing devoid of confession, repentance, or faith is also proclaimed: “Everyone in the crowd sought to touch him because power came forth from him and healed them all” (Luke 6.19). In the Bible, God is portrayed as the only source of healing, as in Psalm 60.11: “O Lord give us help in our trouble, for vain is the help of man;” and also as the source of natural remedies, as in Sirach 38.4: “God created medicines from the earth.”

But in these biblical and Christian healing narratives, the philosophical underpinnings of Greco-Roman medicine are unapologetically omitted: curing physical ills is not yet predicated upon curing spiritual ills, even if that is one of the consequences. God is the source of all healing in the Old Testament and the source of physical and miraculous healing in the New Testament. But it is in the Early Christian literature of the first four centuries that Jesus’s status as a healer and miracle worker takes on increased importance. This points to the immediate need to demonstrate that Jesus and his followers possessed healing powers superior to his contemporary religious healing god, the celebrity physician Asclepius.

As the Christian God became the source of healing in the first centuries of the empire, so did the cult of Asclepius gain its greatest prominence in his temples all over the empire.⁸⁹ Religion, both Christian and non-Christian, and medicine were

⁸⁷ Cf. Aelian, *De natura animalium* 9.33, where a god intervenes at Epidauros when his priests cut off a woman’s head to cure her of a tapeworm and then cannot re-attach it. For the Greek text, see *Claudius Aelianus De natura animalium*, ed. Manuela García Valdés, Luis Alfonso Llera Fueyo, and Lucía Rodríguez-Noriega Guillén (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2009) 220–21; for the English, see C. Aelianus, *De natura animalium: On the Characteristics of Animals*, ed. and trans. A. F. Scholfield. Loeb Classical Library, 448 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1959), 252–53.

⁸⁸ For the *Epistle* in the larger setting of Greco-Roman divine healing and acts of confession, see James Riley Strange, *The Moral World of James: Setting the Epistle in its Greco-Roman and Judaic Environments*. Studies in Biblical Literature, 136 (New York: Peter Lang, 2010), 87–108.

⁸⁹ For the cult’s growth in this period, see Jürgen W. Riethmüller, *Asklepios: Heiligtümer und Kulte*, 2 vols. Studien zu antiken Heiligtümern (Heidelberg: Verlag Archäologie und Geschichte, 2005), especially, ch. 4: “Die Blütezeit des Asklepioskultes. Epidauros und seine Filialen,” 229–40. On the worship of Asclepius in Rome as compared to the East, see Gil H. Renburg, “Public and Private Places of Worship in the Cult of Asclepius at Rome,” *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome* 51/52 (2006/2007): 87–172. For comparisons of Asclepius and Jesus in the period of Asclepius’s widest popularity, see Lee M. Jefferson, “The Image of Christ the Miracle Worker

not exclusive of each other: the science of medicine and the divine remedies anticipated and received at shrines are often indistinct. From Hippocrates to Galen, including in the Christian traditions, a rational approach to medicine was combined with an ethical or religious approach. Although beliefs about transgression and illness varied among Christians and non-Christians and within those groups, God and his creation were viewed as the source both of illnesses and their cures. And those who helped others relieve illness or sustain health – both physicians and religious healers – are performing in harmony with altruistic precepts.⁹⁰ God is still the source of physicians' knowledge but his medicinal power is further refined; he is also the source of the altruistic charity to administer healing, both religious and medical healing. Later in the patristic period, the care of the sick became a salvific act in itself, a charity that brought with it the reward of salvation. As Cassiodorus (ca. 485–581) writes, “You will receive your reward from him by whom eternal rewards may be paid for temporal acts.”⁹¹

In this period, patristic views of healing that were founded in a Christian belief in eternal salvation begin to crystallize. At the same time, religious healing miracles and mundane medical practices can be seen to diverge. The presence of healing herbs in nature and biblical commands to relieve suffering encompass medicine in God's divine plan. But the rise of saint-healers, along with amulets, charms, demons and magic, reflect more the gospel miracle stories.⁹² Bodily and

in Early Christian Art,” Ph. D. Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN, 2008: <http://gradworks.umi.com/33/65/3365651.html> (last accessed on Dec. 31, 2015) and René Josef Rüttimann, “Asclepius and Jesus” (see note 33).

90 The ecclesiastical historian Eusebius (ca. 260–340 C.E.) has Constantine oppose non-Christian healing in his *Vita Constantini* 3.56, where he calls for the destruction of a pagan healing shrine “together with its unseen inmate, neither demon nor god, but rather a deceiver of souls.” For the text and explication, see Klaus Bergdolt, *Wellbeing: A Cultural History of Healthy Living*, trans. Jane Dewhurst (Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2008), 99–100.

91 Cassiodorus, *Institutes of Divine and Human Learning* 1.31. The text is among the collations in *Medieval Medicine: A Reader*, ed. Faith Wallis (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 81. The translation is my own. The Latin text is found in Wolfgang Burgsens, *Cassiodor: Institutiones Divinarum et Saecularum Litterarum* (New York: Herder, 2003). For the English, see *Cassiodorus: Institutions of Divine and Secular Learning*, trans. James W. Halporn and Mark Vessey. Translated Texts for Historians, 42 (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2004). Cf. Lactantius, *Divinae Institutiones* 6.12, in *Lactantius: Divine Institutes*, ed. Anthony Bowen and Peter Garnsey (see note 58), where temporal and eternal rewards are juxtaposed with similar effect, 336–37.

92 Plinio Prioreschi, in his magisterial *History of Medicine* (Omaha, NE: Horatius Press, 1998), postulates that the general decline of the Roman Empire after the second century saw the first-rate literary and medical writers of Galen's status replaced by imitators and followers, and considered that this was a consequence of, to a great extent, the ascendancy of Christianity. Just as the secular and religious took on symbiotic proportions in the *Physiologus*, derivative writers

spiritual remedies, education and faith are still blended. Jesus's healing power is inherited first by the apostles and disciples then by bishops and priests.⁹³ In both Greek and Latin patristic texts, Jesus assumed the physician's role of *medicus omnipotens*, much like that of Aeslepius, but he also cured spiritual ills to save souls for eternal life. Unlike Asclepius, Jesus was a new kind of healer – *medicus salvator* – who healed souls for salvation. As Asclepiadic cult practices begin to wane, medical healing and salvation are appropriated in tandem by the church. Physical healing is now predicated upon the cure of the soul and church doctrine is applied as medicine through preaching and teaching. As clergy are compared to physicians and the terms of medical healing are applied to pastoral healing, care of souls as well as the care of the sick become Christian prerogatives,

Stories of Asclepius's healing were grafted onto Early Christian healing stories that had already synthesized biblical and gospel healings. In a complex exchange of imagery, the competition between Asclepius, the most popular healing god of antiquity, and Jesus, called the true savior (σωτήρ), culminates in new titles for Jesus; in these texts he is called *ἰατρός* ("physician") or *medicus Christus Salvator*.⁹⁴ As Asclepius's popularity wanes, Jesus assumes the status of the divine physician healer, but not, like Asclepius, only of physical ills: by the time Jesus eclipses Asclepius's role as the healing god of the ancient Mediterranean, the role of physician as a spiritual healer, already evident in the Galenic tradition, had also been subsumed.

move away from the Hippocratic/Galenic naturalistic approaches to medicine toward magic formulas, amulets, and incantations, the realm of supernaturalistic medicine. Cf. Vivian Nutton, "From Galen to Alexander, Aspects of Medicine and Medical Practice in Late Antiquity," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers (DOP)* 38 (1984): 1–14. In the Early Christian period, folk remedies like spells, amulets, and charms emerge in part from ritualistic practices: "Christianity by its emphasis on prayers and spiritual songs gave a sort of sanction to this white magic, within limits, and also introduced or reintroduced into medicine the idea of demons and demoniac possession" (7). On charms in the Christian religious oral tradition, see L. Olsan, "Latin Charms of Medieval England: Verbal Healing in a Christian Oral Tradition," *Oral Tradition* 7 (1992): 116–42.

⁹³ Luke 9:1: "He summoned the Twelve and gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases, and he sent them ... to heal [the sick]." Cf. Luke 10:9.

⁹⁴ For a similar religious and cultural exchange among ancient Mediterranean religions in the same period, see the comprehensive study of Dionysius and Jesus by Francesco Massa, *Tra la vigna e la croce: Dioniso nei discorsi letterari e figurative cristiani (II–IV secolo)*, Potsdamer Altertumswissenschaftliche Beiträge, 47 (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2014).

The Word as Physician in Patristic Texts

In patristic texts, the role of Jesus as healing savior is explicit. So is the use of medical language in the context of moral and religious healing. In analogical symmetry, God, Jesus, priests, confessors, and preachers are all physicians; sinners are patients; and diseases of the soul are likened to diseases of the body. Early Christian writers who sought to synthesize ancient philosophy and Christianity appropriate the implicit and explicit medical analogy of the priest or preacher as the type for Jesus the physician. Just as the divine Word of God, curative and perceptive, can lead a diseased world to health, so can preaching the divine word heal a diseased body and soul. It is the Word/word of God alone that can promise immortal salvation, the objective of all physical and moral healing in the stories.

The *Northumberland Bestiary* appropriates the allegory of Jesus as physician as part of its rhetorical and religious strategy, to heal through preaching about the stories in the text. Reading metaphorically the prolegomena to the *Northumberland Bestiary* – the account of creation and its taxonomy of animals – as a reflection of the divine cosmos, invites the analogy of God and Adam. Just as God sent his Word, his son Jesus, to save humankind, so Adam sends forth, at His mandate, God's word in naming the animals and giving voice to creation. Preachers who deliver the word employ classical rhetorical persuasion to deliver Christian moral (rather than intellectual) instruction, an allegorical methodology that gains speed in the Alexandrian school of Clement and Origen. In Clement of Alexandria's *Paedagogus*, the 'Instructor' is the Word of God, curative and perceptive, ready to lead a diseased soul "by gentle medicines" to health "conducive to salvation": "As, then, for those of us who are diseased in body a physician is required, so also those who are diseased in soul require a paedagogue to cure our maladies" (1.1).⁹⁵ Clement asserts that Jesus, the Word of God, is the only Paeanian physician⁹⁶ for human infirmities; divine healing is the prerogative of Jesus not a Greek god (1.2); and the Word of the Father, who cares for all of creation, is the physician of humanity who heals body and soul and whose precepts are the straight path to eternal salvation (1.3). In Clement's *Pedagogus*, transgressions

⁹⁵ Clement of Alexandria, *Christ the Educator*, trans. Simon P. Wood. Fathers of the Church (FOTC), 23 (1954; New York: The Catholic University of America Press, 2008). For the Greek, see Miroslav Marcovich and J. C. M. van Winden, *Clementis Alexandrini Paedagogus* (Leiden and Boston: E. J. Brill, 2002), 2–64. The text, translated by William Wilson, Ante-Nicene Fathers, 2, was revised and edited for the New Advent site by Kevin Knight: <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/02091.htm> (last accessed on Dec. 31, 2015).

⁹⁶ Paean/Paeon (ό Παεόν) is the physician of the gods in Homer (e.g., *Iliad* 5.401) and also an epithet of Apollo in his aspect as healer.

are healed by one Paeonian medicine, the baptism of the Word, and it is the Word who leads to salvation (1.7).

In an extended analogy between the Word of God and the physician, Origen (184/185–254), who was a student of Clement and also a leader of the Catechetical School of Alexandria, explicates the sacraments of words. He demonstrates that biblical exegesis and hermeneutics reveal the “inner juices” of the words as a “verbal medicine,” though multiple levels of mysteries. When someone sees herbs in the wild, he may inadvertently crush them or pass them by as though they were weeds. But these same herbs when physicians prepare medicines from them and they are arranged in a school of medicine are recognized as cures or remedies. The words of God can suffer the same malady if the person who hears them read in church does not recognize that they contain the “medicine of souls”:

Come now to Jesus, the heavenly physician. Enter into this medical clinic, his Church ... Because this Jesus, who is a doctor, is himself the Word of God, he prepares medications for his sick ones, not from potions of herbs but from the sacraments of words. If anyone sees these verbal medicines scattered inelegantly through books as through fields, not knowing the strength of individual words, he will overlook them as cheap things, as not having any elegance of word. But the person who in some part learns that the medicine of souls is with Christ certainly will understand from these books which are read in the Church how each person ought to take salutary herbs from the fields and mountains, namely the strength of words, so that anyone weary in soul may be healed not so much by the strength of the outward branches and coverings as by the strength of the inner juice.⁹⁷

Discerning the invisible through the visible or the incorporeal through the corporeal, understanding through divine wisdom the heavenly through the earthly,⁹⁸ finding the “inner juice,” as Origen writes above, is the hermeneutic evident in the *Northumberland Bestiary*: knowledge of the natural world leads to self-knowledge.

⁹⁷ *Origen: Homilies on Leviticus 1–16*, trans. Gary Wayne Barkley. Fathers of the Church (FOTC), 83 (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1990), *Homily 8.3*, 153–54.

⁹⁸ *Origen: The Song of Songs: Commentary and Homilies*, trans. R. P. Lawson. Ancient Christian Writers (ACW), 26 (Westminster, MD: Newman Press, 1957): “... all things in the visible category can be related to the invisible, the corporeal to the incorporeal, and the manifest to those that are hidden; so that the creation of the world itself ... can be understood through divine wisdom, which from actual things and copies teach things unseen by means of those that are seen, and carries us over from earthly things to heavenly” (223).

edge, and also to theological inference. In the words of Alan of Lille, “Omnis mundi creatura quasi liber,” ‘The whole of creation is like a book,’⁹⁹ and the *Northumberland Bestiary*, a book on creation is uniquely connected to the complex allegory that allows healing through the Word of God. When Adam names the animals (NB II.1.1–5), he performs a “creation” of the natural world.¹⁰⁰ Just as God sends forth the Word/*Logos*, Adam sends forth the names of the animals: the spoken word of Adam mirrors the Word of God, just as the visible natural word is a mirror of the invisible divine cosmos. The development of exegesis as a respected activity in the Early Christian writers was the means by which spiritual and physical ills corresponded analogically to Christ and to the precepts of the church. Preaching exposed the spiritual truth of the text beyond the literal, or natural, reality; and from the application of medical language to spiritual healing we ascertain the spiritual underpinning of medicine.

Preaching about creation, the visible natural world, sets up the analogy of divine healing. Just as God sends his son, the *Logos*, the Word, to heal the sinful soul of humanity, preachers heal souls through the figurative explication of creation that exists in a visible natural world. This world is the textual matter of the *Northumberland Bestiary*. Sermons derived from these texts are the didactic medicine that can heal the soul. If we follow Origen’s theory, Adam’s ability in the *Northumberland Bestiary* to see the true nature of all creatures and name them according to their dispositions sets him up as the analogue of the *Logos*, or the Word that is Jesus. And all of creation, which preachers use to explain the Word in Scripture, reflects the divine cosmos.¹⁰¹ Clement considered it the prerogative of the instructor to explicate the Word through biblical exegesis, and to apply the medicine of persuasive rhetoric to heal souls. Origen’s scriptural exegesis included a literal (σοματικόν), moral (ψυχικόν) and spiritual (πνευματικόν)

99 *Rhythmus de natura hominis*, PL 210.579b, ed. J.-P. Migne (Paris: Migne, 1844–1865). The full passage is: “Omnis mundi creatura/quasi liber et pictura/nobis est et speculum/nostrae vitae nostrae mortis/nostri status nostrae sortis/fidele signaculum”; ‘All of creation is like a book and a picture for us, a mirror of our life, of our death, a true signifier of our condition and our destiny.’

100 Susan Crane, “A Bestiary’s Taxonomy of Creatures,” *Animal Encounters* (see note 5), 69–100, discusses creation as anthropocentric and logocentric: “Adam’s naming provides the bestiary with a paradigm that values language as the means to truth” (91).

101 In some instances, the animals’ names also reflect each other, e.g., *NB* VII.6.2: some fish are named by their resemblance to terrestrial animals: ‘marine-dogs are so called from terrestrial dogs, because they bite’ (“ut canes in mari a terrenis canibus nuncupati quod mordeant”); ‘sea-wolves because they attack others with a wicked voracity’ (“lupi quod improba voracitate alios persequantur”); or *NB* VII.6.6: ‘Seahorses are named “equi marini” because on their top they are horses but in their lower part they turn into fish’ (“Equi marini” quod prima parte equi sunt postrema solvuntur in pisces”).

dimension.¹⁰² Just as man is body, soul, and spirit so was scripture literal, moral, and spiritual. The *Northumberland Bestiary* applies this allegorical treatment to the behaviors of the animals by interpreting them physically, morally, and spiritually to heal souls. As a physician administers both mild and bitter healing medicine, the preacher administers both mild and bitter healing, through rhetorical instruction. Mild instruction exercises persuasion and praise to counsel what is salutary; bitter instruction, punishment and stern precepts to dissuade from sin.

In the example of the rooster (*NB* VI.17.1–2), the progress is from physical description to moral and spiritual allegory. The crow of the cock (*NB* VI.17.1) is described physically as ‘sweet’ (“*suavis*”) and ‘useful’ (“*utilis*”): ‘Like a good housemate it awakens the sleeping and advises the anxious and consoles the traveler, announcing the passing of the night by a melodious signal’ (“*Qui quasi bonus cohabitator et dormientem excitat et sollicitum ammonet et viantem solatur, processum noctis canora significacione protestans*”). Then, the rooster’s crowing ignites physical and moral consequences:

(VI.17.1) Hoc canente latro suas relinquit insidias. Hoc ipse
 lucifer excitatus oritur celumque illuminat. Hoc canente
 mesticiam trepidus nauta deponit omnisque crebro
 vespertinis flatibus excitata tempestas et procella mitescit.

102 *De principiis* 4.11. For the full text, see *Origène: Traité des Principes*, ed. and trans. Henri Crouzel and Manlio Simonetti, 5 vols. Sources Chrétiennes (SC), 252 (Books 1–2), 253 (Commentary and Translation, Books 1–2), 268 (Books 3–4), 269 (Commentary and Translation, Books 3–4), 312 (Index) (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1978–1984). The text, translated by Frederick Crombie, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 4, was revised and edited for the New Advent site by Kevin Knight: www.newadvent.org/fathers/0412.htm (last accessed on Dec. 31, 2015). From Augustine (354–430), e.g., *De doctrina Christiana* (D. W. Robertson, *On Christian Doctrine* [New York: Liberal Arts Press, 1958]) to Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274), e.g., *Summa Theologica*, Quaestio 1, Article 9–10, many treatises present schemes for allegorical interpretations of scripture. This summative thirteenth-century distich is variously attributed but ultimately points to Cassian (360–435): *Littera gesta docet, quid credas allegoria; moralis quid agas, quo tendas/speres anagogia*: ‘The literal meaning teaches events; the allegorical, what doctrines you should believe; the moral, what you should do; and the anagogical, what you should hope for.’ See Cassian, *Conferences* 14.8, (for the full text, see Jean Cassien: *Conférences*, ed. and trans. E. Pichery. Sources Chrétiennes (SC), 42 (1955; Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 2008), 54 (1958; Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 2009), 64 (1959; Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 2006). The text, translated by C. S. Gibson, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, 11, 2nd series, was revised and edited for the New Advent site by Kevin Knight: <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/350814.htm> (last accessed on Dec. 31, 2015). For an excellent overview of the interpretation of scripture from Origen’s *De principiis* through the fourteenth century, see Denys Turner, “Allegory in Christian Late Antiquity,” *Cambridge Companion to Allegory*, ed. Rita Copeland and Peter T. Struck (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 71–82.

Hoc devotus affectus exilit ad precandum legendi quoque munus instaurat.

[(VI.17.1) When it crows, the robber leaves his wiles. When it crows, even the morning star, awakened, arises and lights up the sky. When it crows, the nervous sailor puts aside his worry and every storm and tempest that has been continually stirred up by the winds of the evening becomes calm. When it crows, a person of devout disposition rises to pray and resumes the office of reading (182–83).]

The spiritual interpretation concludes the entry: as divine reading teaches, at the time when the cock crows, Jesus looks upon those who falter and corrects them, just as at the cock's final crowing (*NB VI.17.2*) 'he had a care for Peter and immediately his error left him and his denial was driven out and confession took its place' ("Denique respexit Petrum et statim error abcessit, pulsa est negacio, secuta confessio").

Scripture is a remedy for healing souls in several animal allegories. When it is time for the ostrich (*NB V.30.1–2*) to lay its eggs, it lifts its eyes to the sky to confirm that the constellation *Virgilia* is visible then burrows deep into the earth and deposits its eggs. Once they are covered, the ostrich immediately forgets them and never returns, allowing the moderate season and climate to incubate them (*NB V.30.2*): 'If the ostrich can know its time and lift its eyes to the sky and forget its posterity, much more ought the faithful man forget earthly things and pursue heavenly things, as he Apostle says, "Forgetting the things which are behind, I strive for that destined prize of the calling from above"¹⁰³ ("Sic ergo assida agnovit tempus suum et elevat oculos suos in celum et obliviscitur posteritatis sue. Multo magis homo fidelis debet oblivisci terrena et sequi celestia, dicente Apostolo, 'Que retro sunt obliuiscens ad destinatum contendo bravium superne vocacioni'"). Elephants (*NB V.19.1–3*) have a natural defense against serpents and poisonous reptiles. The smell of their bones and skin when burned repels any noxious or poisonous creatures, just as the works or commandments of God sustain anyone who carries them within (*NB V.19.3*): 'They purify his heart so that no plan of the enemy can enter there; instead, whatever was foul or noxious there immediately vanishes and completely disappears, so that neither a noxious spirit nor plan of the enemy, nor any of his evils may ever appear' ("Purificant cor eius et nulla potest ibi adversarii cogitacio introire, set quecumque ibi fuerit noxa turpis statim omnis exit et evanescit ita ut nec aliquando ibidem compareat noxius spiritus et adversa cogitacio aut aliqua eius maleficia").

103 Phil 3.13–14.

Clement's instructor (*Pedagogus* 1.8) explains that reproach is the antidote to mild healing medicine and works like the application of bitter medicines, to dissolve immoderate passions; admonition is the regimen of the diseased soul, prescribing what it must take, and forbidding what it must not. Reproof and rebuke of sinners with salvation as its aim is the prerogative of the Word, who, in denouncing sin, administers the medicine of divine love. Just as the physician should not be viewed as evil by the sick man because he tells him of his fever – for the physician is not the cause of the fever, but only points out the fever – so neither is the Word/word that reproves ill-disposed towards someone who is diseased in soul. God does not cause the sinner to sin, but only shows the sins which are there in order to heal the soul (1.9). The Word, also called the Savior, has discovered the rational medicines that invigorate the senses and lead to salvation. Preachers assume the role of the divine physician when they expose illnesses, teach what to avoid, and offer the medicine of salvation to those who are diseased. "For the greatest and most regal work of God is the salvation of humanity" (1.12). When physicians are ineffective, the sick are displeased. This means that when the Instructor saves a sick soul from destruction, he is owed gratitude and admiration, and the sick, all the more, should make the word and his deeds agree in the way he lives.

As Clement demonstrates, and as is evident more broadly in Patristic texts, physical healing is predicated upon the cure of the soul and the congruence of spiritual and corporeal healing is its premise. Church doctrine itself can be applied as medicine, through preaching and teaching. As clergy are compared to physicians and the terms of medical healing are applied to pastoral healing, care of souls as well as the care of the sick became Christian prerogatives, as is made explicit in this passage from the *Apostolic Constitutions* (ca. 375–380):

Therefore, as a compassionate physician, heal all that have sinned, making use of saving methods of cure; not only cutting and searing, or using corrosives, but binding up, and putting in tents, and using gentle healing medicines, and sprinkling comfortable words. If it be an hollow wound, or great gash, nourish it with a suitable plaster, that it may be filled up, and become even with the rest of the whole flesh. If it be foul, cleanse it with corrosive powder, that is, with the words of reproof.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁴ Cf. Clement of Alexandria (ca. 150–215), *Paedagogus* 1.8, *Christ the Educator*, trans. Simon P. Wood (see note 95): "Many passions are healed by punishment, and by the imposition of severe commands, and, more particularly, by the teaching of certain principles. Reproof is like surgery performed on the passions of the soul; the passions are like a disease of truth, which need to be

If it has proud flesh, eat it down with a sharp plaster –
 the threats of judgment. If it spreads further, sear it,
 and cut off the putrid flesh, mortifying him with fastings.
 But if, after all that you have done, you perceive that
 from the feet to the head there is no room for a fomentation,
 or oil, or bandage, but that the malady spreads and prevents
 all cure, as a gangrene which corrupts the entire member;
 then, with a great deal of consideration, and the advice of
 other skillful physicians, cut off the putrefied member,
 that the whole body of the Church be not corrupted.¹⁰⁵

Harsh curatives and then even bolder analogies with medicine emerge as spiritual leaders act as physicians: like the omnipotent *paterfamilias* of the Roman household, the abbot oversees his coenobitic community in the curing of spiritual ailments. As in the examples above, from non-Christian and Christian sources, so, too, in this passage from the *Rule of Saint Benedict* (480–574), the cleric is a wise physician and Christ-like in his remedy: it is only prayers to God that have the power to heal the “patient” when other “medicines” are inefficacious. In this chapter (28), a brother who does not remedy his behavior after frequent correction receives the ultimate salve:

If any brother after frequent correction for some sin, even if
 he has been excommunicated, does not improve his behavior,
 let a harsher corrective be applied to him, that is, let him
 receive the punishment of a beating. If he still will not have
 improved his behavior, or by chance instead (God forbid!)
 emboldened by pride seeks to defend his behavior, then let the
 abbot do what a wise physician [“sapiens medicus”] would do:
 if he has applied warm poultices [“fomenta”], if the ointments
 [“unguenta”] of exhortations, if the medicines [“medicamina”] of
 Divine Scriptures, finally, up to the burn of excommunication
 or of the switch in a beating, and if he still will have seen that
 his effort has achieved nothing, let him apply something which

removed by the surgeon’s knife (64). Rebuke is like a physic, dissolving the hardness of passion and purging the lusts, the impurities of life; besides, it levels the swelling of pride and restores man to normalcy and health. Then there is admonition which is like the diet given one who is sick, counseling what should be taken and forbidding what should not. All these things tend to salvation and eternal good health” (65).

105 2.41. For the full text of the *Apostolic Constitutions*, see Ante-Nicene Fathers, 7, “Fathers of the Third and Fourth Centuries,” ed. Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Cox (1899–1900; New York: C. Scribner’s Sons, 1926), 415, now revised and edited for the New Advent site by Kevin Knight: <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/07152.htm> (last accessed on Dec. 31, 2015).

is even more efficacious – his own prayer and that of all the brothers – on behalf of him [=the sick brother], so that the Lord, who can do all things, restore the health [“salutem”] of the sick [“infirmitum”] brother.¹⁰⁶

From Jesus’s role as healer of physical and spiritual ills in patristic and monastic texts, it is a short step to the healing we see emerge in the *Northumberland Bestiary*. In several examples we see the same medical analogy applied, as preachers teach that spiritual ills must be cured before physical healing can begin. And their very instruction, provides the cure. Similar to Clement’s physician-instructor who counsels reproach as a healing measure, the *Northumberland Bestiary* offers the preachers an example of reproof to use in healing souls. When hoopoe birds (*NB* VI.26) see that their parents have become too old to fly and can no longer see, they pluck out their old useless feathers and anoint their parents’ eye and warm them with their own wings until their feathers grow back and they can see clearly again, until their bodies are renewed as they were before. In a closing rhetorical flourish delivering a stern rebuke, the preacher asks (*NB* VI.26.1): “If these irrational creatures do this for each other, how is it that men, although they are rational, are unwilling to return the nurturing of their parents?” (“Si hoc irrationabiles invicem sibi faciunt, quomodo homines cum sint racionabiles parentum suorum nutrimenta reddere nolunt?”).

Likewise, the story of the viper (*NB* IX.4.1–5) offers in its rhetorical allegory a reproach to sinners. In this example, the meta-literary account of Ambrose’s moral and spiritual interpretation substantiates the rhetorical effect of preaching the word through creation: Saint Ambrose calls the viper the wickedest kind of beast, more clever than any species of serpent. When the venomous viper is ready to mate it seeks a sea-eel known to it. Advancing to shore, it calls the eel with a hiss and the eel responds to the summons. According to Ambrose, this physical attribute is interpreted morally to mean that the habits of spouses must be tolerated.

¹⁰⁶ *Rule of Saint Benedict*, 28. For a history of the textual scholarship, see *RB 1980: The Rule of St. Benedict*, ed. Timothy Fry, O.S.B. (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1981), 102–12; for the Latin and English, see *The Rule of Saint Benedict*, ed. and trans. Bruce L. Venarde (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), 110–11. Cf. the same remedy for diseased souls in Origen, *De principiis* 2.10.6, *Origène: Traité des Principes*, ed. and trans. Henri Crouzel and Manlio Simonetti (see note 102): “For if it is necessary to take some very unpleasant and bitter medicine as a cure for the ills we have brought on through eating and drinking, or, if the character of the illness demands it, we need the severe treatment of the knife and a painful operation, or if the disease defies all remedies, it must be burned out by fire. So does God our Physician remove defects of the soul by punishment of fire.”

(IX.4.2) Et si absens est eius opperienda presencia. Sit licet asper, fallax, inconditus, lubricus, temulentus, quid est peius veneno quod in coniuge murena non refugit? Vocata non deest et serpentis lubricum sedula caritate complectitur. Ille tua mala portat et levitatis feminee facilitatem. Tu virum tuum non potes, mulier, sustinere?

[(IX.4.2) Even if he is absent, his presence must be expected at any moment. Although he may be rough, deceitful, uncouth, slippery, drunk, how is that worse than the poison that the sea-eel does not flee in her spouse? It appears when summoned, even to a [poisonous] serpent, and embraces its slippery spouse with dutiful affection. Your husband puts up with your troubles, and with that capriciousness unique to women. Are you, woman, not able to endure your mate? (268–69)]

The viper's behavior is also understood spiritually, a warning not to violate God's law by committing adultery, not to seek out encounters with new partners while deceiving your spouse (IX.4.5): 'You who seek to woo another man's wife, learn what serpent it is whose companionship you desire to adopt, to which very serpent you are comparable' ("Discite, qui alienam permollire queritis uxorem, cuius serpentis asciscere cupitis contubernium, cui eciam comparandi ipsi serpentis sitis").

The short entry on fire-stones (*NB* V.29.1–2) offers another apt theological allegory using scriptural hermeneutics. Male and female fire-stones in proximity to each other can enkindle such a fire that entire mountains burn. All men of God are thus warned (V.29.2) to 'separate themselves far from women' ("geritis separate vos a feminis longe") so that they do not jeopardize 'all the goods that Christ has conferred' ("bona que Christus contulit") by the flames that can be enkindled. Adapting this story to a sermon, preachers offer the spiritual protection of scripture (*NB* V.29.2): 'Fortify your hearts with the divine precepts, lest the love of women take hold of you and show the works of demons' ("Ideo munite corda vestra preceptis divinis ut vos non detineat fallax amor mulierum nec ostendat opera demoniorum").

In the *Northumberland Bestiary*, preaching the Word of God as it was animated by Adam and visible in creation is the medicine for the curative treatment of souls. In symmetric correspondence, the rhetoric of the preacher parallels the medicine of the divine physician that puts souls in harmony with divine creation. The examples above reveal that these rhetorical cures could be salutary or take the form of reproach. Either way, the healing Word that finds its source in the world and word of the *Northumberland Bestiary* is more than a spiritual corollary

of medicinal healing. The allegory that relies upon visible creation to illuminate the invisible divine is not an end in itself.

The *Northumberland Bestiary* goes beyond Greco-Roman medical texts and Aristides's devotional orations dedicated to Asclepius; it also goes beyond the imagery of the physician healer in New Testament and Early Christian examples. The *Paedagogus* of Clement who co-opts medical terminology to instruct souls and the medical healing evident in Origen's profound allegorical models anticipate what is explicit in the *Northumberland Bestiary*: a resurrection theology. Over and over, the *Northumberland Bestiary* interprets the natural world and the habits of animals not just to heal souls but to ready them for the resurrection. Over and over, sinners are exhorted to contemplate scripture for one reason, to enter the city of God, the heavenly Jerusalem.¹⁰⁷

The Resurrection

Unlike Greco-Roman medical texts and Early Christian and Patristic texts that co-opt medical terminology, the *Northumberland Bestiary* directs instructional healing of the soul and body to the fixed end of the resurrection. The medicine to heal the post-lapsarian soul is the word of God, which has the power not only to heal the soul, and thereby the body, but to grant immortal salvation. In a sense all of God's creation in the *Northumberland Bestiary*, from the cosmos to the smallest creature, is a discussion of resurrection, where the spiritual is understood from the physical. If physical health relies upon spiritual well-being, then the remedies we have isolated in the *Northumberland Bestiary* combine to promise more than physical health: they reiterate the core of the Christian doctrine of resurrection. In the *Northumberland Bestiary*, bodily health is predicated upon spiritual health to guarantee the body's resurrection. The well-known story of the phoenix (NB VI.25.1–4) is the principal allegory for the resurrection of the body: when it sees

¹⁰⁷ Harry Caplan, "The Four Senses of Scriptural Interpretation and the Mediaeval Theory of Preaching," *Speculum* 4.3 (1929): 282–90, demonstrates the four senses of interpretation using Jerusalem as the model: literally, "Jerusalem" means the city Jerusalem; allegorically, it represents the Holy Church; tropologically, it signifies the faithful soul that aspires to the vision of eternal peace; anagogically, it denotes the life of the dwellers in heaven who see God revealed in Zion. Cf. Denys Turner, "Allegory in Christian Late Antiquity," *Cambridge Companion to Allegory*, ed. Rita Copeland and Peter T. Struck (see note 102), 71, who also outlines a quaternary interpretation of Jerusalem: literally, as a city in Judea; morally, as a faithful soul; allegorically, as the church militant; anagogically, as the church triumphant.

that it is becoming old, the phoenix gathers branches and builds a funeral pyre for itself so that after setting itself on fire by beating its wings as it flies into the rays of the sun, it can rise from the ashes of the pyre. In another version (NB VI.25.3), the five-hundred-year-old phoenix enters the woods of Lebanon and fills its wings with aromatics. Seeing an altar piled with brushwood that a priest has prepared for it, the phoenix rolls in the brushwood and ignites a fire with the aromatics and burns up. The priest comes the next day to find a worm, fragrant with the sweetest odor. On the second day, the worm is a small bird. On the third day, a completely formed phoenix bird appears (NB VI.25.4), just as the “Word of the Lord, who is the true man and the true Son of God, has said, ‘I have the power of laying down my life and taking it up again’” (“de verbo Domini qui verus homo est et verus Dei filius, qui dixit, ‘Potestatem habeo ponendi animam et iterum sumendi eam’”).¹⁰⁸

But it was not only the soul that needed to be healed in preparation for the resurrection; the body also had to be in a state of health. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, ideas about the soul and questions about the bodily resurrection, particularly putrefaction and incorruptibility, were at the core of new philosophical debates. In part, these debates reflect the revived interest in eschatology.¹⁰⁹ Now, medicinal cures also had to guarantee the physical resurrection of the spiritually worthy: ‘flesh is the crux of salvation since it allows the soul to be chosen by God’ (“caro salutis est cardo ... quae efficit ut anima eligi possit a deo”), as Tertullian argues.¹¹⁰ In the Bestiary, the story of the *hydrus* and the crocodile (NB IX.7) explains the resurrection: When a *hydrus* sees a crocodile sleeping with its mouth open, it slips into its jaws and is swallowed alive. Bursting through its entrails, the *hydrus* exits unharmed. Death and hell are likened to the crocodile and the *hydrus* to Jesus who assumed flesh and descended into hell and burst

108 Jn 10.18. On the phoenix as a symbol of resurrection, see Valerie Jones, “The Phoenix and the Resurrection,” *The Mark of the Beast: The Medieval Bestiary in Art, Life and Literature*, ed. Debra Hassig (New York: Garland, 1999), 99–115; Guy Mermier, “The Phoenix: Its Nature and Its Place in the Tradition of the *Physiologus*,” *Beasts and Birds of the Middle Ages*, ed. Willene B. Clark and Meradith T. McMunn (see note 5), 69–87; Frank E. Romer, “Another Incarnation of the Phoenix,” *Classica et Mediaevalia* 54 (2003): 223–53.

109 For a profound analysis of the debates, see Caroline Walker Bynum, *The Resurrection of the Body in Western Christianity, 200–1336* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), especially “Part 2: The Twelfth Century,” 115–226.

110 Tertullian (155–240), *De carne Christi* (‘On the Flesh of Christ’). For the Latin, see J.-P. Mahé, *La Chair du Christ*. Sources Chrétiennes (SC), 216–17 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1975). For the full passage, see the Tertullian Project: http://www.tertullian.org/anf/anf03/anf03-39.htm#P9237_2537879 (last accessed on Dec. 31, 2015).

its entrails to rescue those unjustly held. By rising from the dead he put death to death.

In the eschatological debates, questions about the physical body at its resurrection, e.g., height and weight, age and appearance, as well as the punishments of the damned circulate. But this approach ultimately is subsumed into an understanding of resurrection that emphasizes spiritual rather than carnal metaphors, a vision of blessedness where all share in the glory of the presence of God. This account of the coot in the Bestiary reflects this shift: The coot (*NB* VI.28.1–2) is called a prudent and intelligent bird that does not, like the ibis (*NB* VI.27), feed on dead carcasses moving from place to place, but stays in one place, the Catholic Church, and remains there to the end, where he Lord causes all like spirits to dwell and taste the bread of immortality:

(VI.28.2) Ibi ergo se continet ubi Dominus inhabitare
facit unanimes in domo. Ibi habet cotidianum panem
immortalitatis, potum vero preciosum, sanguinem Christi,
reficiens se sanctis epulis et super mel et favum suavissimis
eloquiis Domini.

[(VI.28.2) Therefore, he keeps himself there, where the Lord causes the like-spirited to dwell in the house. There he has the daily bread of immortality and the truly precious drink, the blood of Christ, refreshing himself at the holy tables and with the sweetest words of the Lord, sweeter than honey and the honeycomb (200–01).]

However, both traditions consider the resurrection a return to God as a consequence of the presence of the Word/word among us and epitomized by his regenerative death. In the *Northumberland Bestiary*, the “words” of the Prophet Amos explain the salvation through the Word and the analogy of the goat herder; the Savior then adopts the analogy expressed by Amos: Through the prophet Amos (*NB* VI.32.1–2), the Savior says that he was the Word deep in the innards of the Father,¹¹¹ a herder of goats, that is, of the human race that dwelt in sin, who assumed flesh and gave us life through his blood (*NB* VI.32.2), a ‘washing of regeneration into eternal life’ (“et lavacrum regenerationis in vitam eternam”). The Bestiary emphasizes the resurrection of the soul rather than the body, in contradistinction to the teaching and preaching that insisted upon the resurrection of the flesh that had been buried. In its programmatic sermon (*NB* IV.2.1) the Bes-

¹¹¹ Cf. Amos 7.14 and Jn 1.14.

tiary argues that the soul without its body is what needs to be healed in order to be presentable to God: 'Just as medicines are necessary to heal the infirmities of a weakened body, so, too, a medicine is necessary to heal the sinful spirit ("anime peccatrici") of its spiritual corruption ("spiritualis eius corrupcio")' so that it can be 'presented honorably in heavenly glory, where it will be rewarded by that happiness which the angels possess' ("in celesti gloria honeste potest presentari, ubi remunerabitur illa beatitudine quam optinent angeli").

The close of the sermon (*NB* IV.3) exhorts its readers to begin their journey of life by returning to the 'heavenly city' ("civitatem celestem"), healed by the 'medicines for curing illnesses' ("potiones ad sanandas infirmitates"), which are the instructional stories in the text. From its welter of medical and religious sources, the *Northumberland Bestiary* codifies its unique world view: that the *medicus Christus salvatus* who sent the Logos to creation also inspired Adam to animate the *Northumberland Bestiary*, the text about creation, as medicine for the soul. Preachers and their congregations are invited to contemplate the renowned happiness of the heavenly city, and to be prepared to do 'God's every will ("omnem voluntatem") and mandate' ("dominica mandata"). In this entry (*NB* V.18.1-4), the animals following the sweet odor of the panther are likened to young maidens renewed by baptism and exhorted to

(V.18.3) post unguentum mandatorum Christi currere; de
terrenis ad celestia migrare ut nos introducat rex in palacium
suum, id est in Ierusalem civitatem Dei, et montem omnium
sanctorum. Et cum meruimus intrare illuc dicamus,
"Gloriosa dicta sunt de te, civitas Dei."

[(V.18.3) run after the fragrance of the commandments
of Christ; and we should pass from earthly to heavenly things,
so that the king may lead us into his palace that is, into
Jerusalem, the city of God, and to the mountain of all saints
[to which all healing in the *Northumberland Bestiary* aims].
And, when we have merited admission to that place, let us say,
"Glorious things have been said about you, O city of God"
(100–01).]¹¹²

¹¹² Ps. 87.3. Cf. the prologue from the contemporary work of Otto of Freising (1143–1147), where Babylon and the City of God, the heavenly Jerusalem, are contrasted: *Ottonis episcopi Frisingensis Chronica sive Historia de duabus civitatibus*, ed. Adolf Hofmeister. *Scriptores Rerum Germanicarum in Usum Scholarum* (MGH), 45 (1912; Leipzig and Hanover: Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 1984); for the English, see *The Two Cities: A Chronicle of Universal History to the Year 1146 A.D.*, ed. Austin P. Evans and Charles Knapp and trans. Charles Christopher Mierow (New York: Columbia University Press, 1928), 93: "Since things are changeable and can never be at rest, what

The New Medical Science

Beginning in the late eleventh century (from texts circulating since the ninth century in the Muslim world), translations of medical treatises from Syrian, Arabic and Greek introduced new Aristotelian texts to a Latin milieu. The subsequent spread of Aristotelian modes of arguing combined with Aristotelian ideas about the nature of scientific and physical knowledge give rise to an expanded medical corpus. For one thousand years, from the Aegean to Western Europe, encompassing broad cultural and linguistic changes, the texts of Galen had circled the world. Hippocratic and Galenic writings persist alongside and contained within the new translations of Aristotle, themselves redacted through the prism of Arabic medical texts;¹¹³ and these are absorbed into the *Physiologus*-bestiary tradition. The *Canon Medicinae* (*Canon of Medicine*) of Ibn Sînâ (Avicenna, d. 1037) combines philosophy and medicine. Philosophical principles of division into categories, e.g., theory and practice, and theoretical discussions expand the encyclopedic medical treatises. The *Canon* was one of the most important medical textbooks of the Middle Ages, a fusion of epistemological and empirical medical traditions. A *studium generale* developed around it, and from then on the application of Aristotelian philosophical principles of division along with summative and epexegetic arguments appeared in medical training, from diagnosis through treatments. When translators such as Constantine the African (d. 1099), in Monte Cassino, and Gerard of Cremona (d. 1187), in Spain, brought these medical and philosophical Arabic and Greek texts into Latin medical practices, the great centers of Montpellier, Bologna, and Paris were transformed. The new Aristotelizing Galenism also transformed the view of healing that was prevalent in the *Northumberland Bestiary*.

This new appreciation of the efficacy of academic medicine and physicians in the thirteenth century, the result of the newly translated “scientific” medical treatises, was coupled with the gradual withdrawal of the clergy from medical

man in his right mind will deny that the wise man ought to depart from them to that city which stays at rest and abides to all eternity? This is the City of God, the heavenly Jerusalem, for which the children of God sigh, while they are in this land of sojourn, oppressed by the turmoil of the things of time, as if they were oppressed by the Babylonian captivity. For in as much as there are two cities, the one of time, the other of eternity; the one of the earth, earthly, the other of heaven, heavenly; the one of the devil the other of Christ, ecclesiastical writers have declared that the former is Babylon, the latter Jerusalem.”

¹¹³ D. Jacquot, “The Influence of Arabic Medicine in the Medieval West,” *The Encyclopedia of the History of Arabic Science*, 3, ed. R. Rashed (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), 963–84.

practice.¹¹⁴ As a result, medicine became more religiously neutral and less intertwined with its spiritual aspect.¹¹⁵ A new intellectual sophistication emerges in medical training, a result of the assimilation of the Arabic translations of Aristotle. Divested of its social and moral underpinnings,¹¹⁶ the backbone to this new medical approach is the western phenomenon of active epistemology and its complement, the need to document.

In the introduction to his edited volume, *Knowledge and the Scholarly Medical Traditions* (1995), Don Bates has identified two competing intellectual currents in medical texts: the knowing that is centered upon a knower, who receives knowledge through direct revelation, mystical experience, or trial and error, and the knowing that is epistemic, that is, centered on the known and on its intellectual pursuits of theory making, reasoning, and rationality. Epistemic knowing depends on things already known. The epistemic Aristotelian philosophical tradition does not depend on revelation for its knowledge; and though he inherited that tradition, Galen himself achieved the shaman like quality that has knowledge centered on the knower. It was one of the great achievements of university medicine in the high Middle Ages to reconcile the epistemic approach with the sage to elevate medicine to a natural philosophy.¹¹⁷ Here the powerful convergences of transgression and illness and healing and divine intervention/prayer so clearly represented in the *Northumberland Bestiary* diverge.¹¹⁸

114 Darryl W. Amundsen, *Medicine, Society, and Faith in the Ancient and Medieval Worlds* (see note 33), 222–47, argues that these bans on clerics practicing medicine did not include the study of medicine at universities under ecclesiastical control.

115 Though environment and social factors still play a part in physical health. See Luis García-Ballester, “The Construction of a New Form of Learning and Practicing Medicine in Medieval Latin Europe” (see note 6), 75–102, especially 86–91.

116 For the Aristotelian concept of nature as it developed in the Middle Ages, see James A. Weisheipl, “Aristotle’s Concept of Nature: Avicenna and Aquinas,” *Approaches to Nature in the Middle Ages*, ed. Lawrence D. Roberts. Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 16 (Binghamton, NY: Center for Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1982), 137–60.

117 Joseph Ziegler, *Medicine and Religion c. 1300* (see note 14), 169, suggests that this evolution “would ultimately lead to medicine replacing religion as a social guardian of morality.”

118 On this phenomenon, see Patrick McNamara, *Where God and Science Meet* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2006).

Conclusion

The Medieval Latin *Northumberland Bestiary* has a significant place among medical texts. Bestiaries introduce Greco-Roman ideas of medicinal healing into a literary tradition that allegorizes animal traits in moral and didactic settings, for the *cura animarum*. The Greco-Roman medical texts and several early Patristic treatises were already concerned with moral instruction for the soul, through philosophy, religious practices, philology, and rhetoric. In reading metaphorically the fifth and sixth days of creation – when God's Word animates the natural world and Adam's words name its animals – many bestiaries weave these moralizing medical and literary traditions together in a Christian context. Used by preachers for composing sermons, the *Northumberland Bestiary* and others like it infer spiritual illnesses from the behaviors of animals and at the same time provide remedies for those illnesses in their sermons: God as divine physician healed mankind through His Word; preachers, through their figurative reading of the natural world, deliver curative sermons intended to “heal” the soul for its resurrection. The *Northumberland Bestiary* epitomizes the fluid boundary between religious and physical healing in the period just before otherwise unknown ancient medical and philosophical Greek texts from Arabic and Syriac translations appeared in the Latin West and introduced a new understanding of medical science and, consequently, new religious instruction about the bodily resurrection.

In their short-lived but beautifully documented span of production, bestiaries are among the first texts to treat the resurrection as spiritual rather than carnal, and among the last, before the age of Avicenna, (rediscovered) Aristotle, and the rise of science, to treat medicine as the holistic confluence of body and soul. In the case of the *Northumberland Bestiary*, the expansive mystery of God's creation anticipates the ability of man's intellect to encompass it for medical and spiritual benefits.

Rosa A. Perez

Troubled Waters: Bathing and Illicit Relations in Marie de France's "Equitan" and in *Flamenca*

Introduction

In the adulterous love tales of "Equitan,"¹ a *lai* of the twelfth century, and *Flamenca*,² an Occitan romance of the thirteenth century, bathing scenes³ certainly attest to medieval practices of hygiene and well-being among noblemen and noble women, but the seemingly inconspicuous activity of the bath is, in these two works of fiction, diverted from its common purpose and becomes instead an important element of the adultery plot. The courtly lovers, in these illicit relations, trick husbands and are able to enjoy intimacy thanks to the performance staged by the two male characters: Equitan, under the spell and influence of his seneschal's wife, resorts to the practice of bloodletting,⁴ while Guilhem in *Fla-*

¹ *Lais de Marie de France*, ed. Karl Warnke, trans. Laurence Harf-Lancner (Paris: Lettres Gothiques, 1990).

² *Flamenca*, ed. François Zufferey, trans. Valérie Fasseur (Paris: Lettres Gothiques, 2014). The Carcassonne manuscript (the only existing one) containing 8095 verses is located at the Municipal Library of Carcassonne, 34 |N|.

³ Descriptions of bathing can also be found in other literary works of the period. There is the ritual of the welcome bath offered to knights as a token of hospitality; then the common practice of taking a bath, although much later, as in *Mélusine* by Jean d'Arras (1393) where the count is forbidden to enter the room while his wife, Melusine, takes a bath every Saturday. The bath is also present in fabliaux, often to trick husbands, priests, or an authoritarian wife as in the "Farce du cuvier" in *Recueil général et complet des fabliaux des XIII^e et XIV^e siècles*, ed. Anatole de Montaiglon and Gaston Raynaud (Paris: Librairie des Bibliophiles, 1872). For German examples, see the contribution to this volume by Albrecht Classen. Cf. also the contribution by Anne Scott, who offers a broad sweep of pertinent examples from the early Middle Ages to the early seventeenth century.

⁴ Laurence Moulinier, "Le Sang au Moyen Age, entre savoir et questionnements, science et imaginaire," <https://halshs.archives-ouvertes.fr/halshs-00609366> (last accessed on February 22, 2016), 1453, *Rencontres européennes* (2004): 1-11; here 3. Bloodletting is already recommended by Galien (*De venae sectione*) and becomes a very common medieval practice, particularly in the monastic world; see L. Gougaud, "La pratique de la phlébotomie dans les cloîtres," *Revue Ma-*

menca, pretends to suffer from a mysterious illness, only described in vague terms in the narrative. Both, common practices at the time, avert suspicion, and, subsequently, the two men gain access to the women they are wooing. The seduction, here, hinges on dissimulation and simulation; the lovers hide the real purpose of their presence and, at the same time, feign the need of either the letting of blood, a practice commonly followed a couple of days later by a bath, at least in the *lai* of “Equitan,” or a series of mineral spring baths as in the romance of *Flamenca*. The simulation that takes places not only affects and changes their behavior, but subsequently it also affects the two men’s status in society since they lose, although only temporarily, the benefits of a position of dominance and power as they relinquish aspects of the prerogatives inherent to their gender, entitlements that patriarchal medieval society warrants them. And, although the only purpose of the duplicity is to commit adultery with a coveted woman, adultery is in both instances intricately associated with dissimulation and simulation, a transformation that leaves an imprint on *Guilhem* and *Equitan*, while at the same time it blurs the boundary between reality and simulacra.

A close reading of these two works of fiction will, first, bring to light how in these tales adultery, dissimulation, simulation, and the subsequent transformation intersect and turn the narratives into satires of courtly love. Secondly, bathing scenes are not merely part of the background, but are an important element of the adultery plot. Moreover, the descriptions of these scenes, either taking place in the privacy of a home or in a public bath, provide ample evidence, especially in the case of the romance of *Flamenca*, of the standard practices of hygiene and concerns about well-being among men and women of a higher social status during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries in northern and southern France.

Bathing

While popular imagination holds that the Middle Ages were unsanitary, the famous words of Jules Michelet, the nineteenth-century French historian – “a

billon January (1924): 1–13; see also Nancy G. Siraisi, *Medieval & Early Renaissance Medicine: An Introduction to Knowledge and Practice* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1990), 115. In a letter to Master Bartholomeus, Peter the Venerable, Abbot of Cluny (d. 1156) explains that owing to pressure of monastery business he had postponed his regular bimonthly bloodletting.

thousand years without a bath”⁵ – have certainly promoted the identification of that long period of history with filth and poor hygiene. Consistent with the Christian ideal that shuns the body, bathing was allegedly discouraged among Benedictine monks,⁶ but the medievalist Jacques Le Goff nonetheless comments that bathing and other ablutions are stipulated in rules and regulations of other monastic orders,⁷ although bathing in particular is limited to several times a year coinciding in fact with major dates in the religious calendar.⁸ Corporal hygiene was undoubtedly part of domestic life at all levels of medieval lay society, although the frequency and the type of ablutions differed greatly from one social group to another.⁹

Bathing at home or sharing a bath with other men and women in a public bathhouse was a common practice in thirteenth-century Paris. Indeed, in its 1292 Tax Roll, a well-commented document, twenty-six bathhouses operating within the city walls are listed.¹⁰ Those who could afford payment of a steam bath or a bath of warm water frequented these establishments; the poorer people had

5 Jill Caskey, “Steam and “Sanitas” in the Domestic Realm: Baths and Bathing in the Middle Ages,” *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 58.2 (1999): 170–95; here 170. For the quote, see Jules Michelet, *La Sorcière* (1862; Paris: Garnier Flammarion, 1966), 106 n. 1.

6 Barry Cunliffe, “Bath et ses bains au Moyen Age,” *Médiévaux* 43 (2002): 55–76; here 65. See also the contribution to this volume by Belle S. Tuten.

7 Jacques Le Goff, *L’Imaginaire médiéval* (Paris: Gallimard, 1985). See the essay “Le refus du plaisir,” 136–48.

8 Audrey Sulpice, “La Toilette de l’âme dans le monde monastique cartusien (XI–XVe siècles),” *Laver, monder, blanchir: discours et usages de la toilette dans l’Occident médiéval*, ed. Sophie Albert (Paris: Presses de l’Université Paris-Sorbonne, 2006), 69–82; here 69. In the monastery of the Grande Chartreuse, running water was installed in every cell in order to maintain cleanliness within the cloister. Washing, shaving, and cleaning his own cell was important for every monk.

9 See Anne-Laure Lallouette, “Bains et soins du corps dans les textes médicaux (XII–XIVe siècles),” *Laver, monder, blanchir: discours et usages de la toilette dans l’Occident médiéval*, ed. Sophie Albert (Paris: Presses de l’Université Paris-Sorbonne, 2006), 33–49; here 35–36. See also *Le Régime du corps de maître Aldebrandin de Sienne, texte français du XIIIe siècle*, ed. Louis Landouzy and Roger Pépin (Paris: H. Champion, 1991). In Aldebrandin’s case, the cleansing of the body is at the center of preserving one’s health.

10 Nathalie Mikailoff, *Les Manières de propreté du Moyen Age à nos jours* (Paris: Editions Maloine, 1990), 10–26. The twenty-six establishments served a population of 70, 000. See also Jean-Pierre Leguay, *L’Eau dans la ville au Moyen Âge*. Collection “Histoire” (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2002), 241. In order to be attractive, the baths had to be well located: many were in the vicinity of a city gate, in an old quarter, near a market square, near the cathedral, or next to a convent. Bathhouses were located in rich neighborhoods, but also in sordid ones depending on the standing of the establishment.

to wait for the summer months to take a dip in the Seine.¹¹ Public baths were part of the urban landscape of the medieval capital, a city that, according to Simone Roux, was completely urbanized during the thirteenth century.¹² These public bathhouses were undoubtedly, as Didier Boisseuil states, modest in size and appearance compared to the bathhouses, or *hammams*, crusaders and travelers encountered while traveling in Muslim countries in North Africa and in the Middle East.¹³

If in earlier centuries, strict separation of sexes in pools of public bathhouses was not commonly enforced, the practice of allowing men and women to enjoy company, food, and wine while bathing brought the wrath of the Church down on bath keepers and their customers. Sermons, based on the complex attitude of the Church toward the body and bathing (sexuality and body hygiene) going back to the Church Fathers, denounced and condemned the immorality of public bathhouses, assimilating them to taverns as places of prostitution and sinful pleasures. Change only occurred by the end of the fourteenth century with the strict implementation of mandatory alternating days to insure gender segregation in public bathhouses.¹⁴

Flamenca

In *Flamenca*, well aware of the promiscuity prevalent in bathhouses, Archimbaut, the jealous husband who has locked up his wife in a tower right after the marriage to prevent adultery and by doing so unconsciously sets up the conditions for it to happen, takes strict measures to protect his wife's honor. Therefore, every time he escorts her to the mineral spring baths, he thoroughly inspects the room and then, to avert temptation or intrusion, he locks Flamenca and her ladies-in-waiting inside the room for the duration of the bath:

¹¹ Simone Roux, *Paris in the Middle Ages*, trans. Jo Ann McNamara (2003; Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), 185.

¹² Simone Roux, *Paris in the Middle Ages* (see note 11), 7.

¹³ Didier Boisseuil, "Espaces et pratiques du bain au Moyen Age," *Médiévaux* 43 (2002): 5–11; here 8.

¹⁴ Nathalie Mikailoff, *Les Manières de propreté du Moyen Age à nos jours* (see note 10), 11. Separation of sexes in public bathhouses: Tuesdays and Thursdays for men, and Mondays and Wednesdays for women. Public baths were forbidden to Jews. But they had their own bathhouses, the mikveh. See the introduction to this volume by Albrecht Classen.

Ni eis si descaus ni-s (de) vesca,
 Garava ben los angles totz,
 Poissas s'en vai si coma goz
 C'om geta de cort jangolan,
 Que-s vai per los osses trian.
 L'uis dels bainz serret tota via
 Ab una fort clau que tenia,
 Pois si vai demoran defors.
 Et quant a leis venia cors
 Que n'issis, et il fai sonar
 A sas puncellas e tocar
 Un'esquilleta que pendia
 Dedins los bains. Adoncs venia
 En Archimbaut per leis abrir (vv. 1502–15)

[Before she took off her shoes and her clothes,
 He thoroughly inspected the place,
 Then he left like a little yelping dog
 That has been put outside to sort bones.
 He always locked the door of the thermal bath
 With a big key that he kept in his pocket,
 Then he stayed outside.
 And when the lady wanted to come out,
 She asked her ladies-in-waiting to ring,
 By shaking a little bell, which was hanging inside the baths.
 Then, Archimbaut came and opened the door for her.^{15]}

The reputation of public bathhouses had indeed its detractors, but also its eager defenders. Among the latter, Eustache Deschamps (ca. 1346–ca. 1407), the prolific medieval French poet and diplomat at the court of Charles V, gives praises to the bathhouses of Brussels in a nostalgic rondeau entitled “Brusselle Adieu” [Farewell to Brussels]. In this short poem, he conveys the conviviality he shared with other bathers and the pleasant memories he has about these places of so-called ill reputation:

Adieu beauté, leesse et tous deliz,
 Chanter; dancer et tous esbatemens
 Cent mille foys a vous me recommands.
 Brusselle adieu, ou les bains sont jolyz,
 Les estuves, les fillettes plaisans;

¹⁵ All translations were done in collaboration with my friend and colleague, Elise Leahy.

Adieu beauté, leesse et tous deliz
 Chanter, dancer et tous esbatemens.

Belles chambres, vins de Rin et molz liz,
 Connins, plouviers et capons et fesans,
 Compaignie douce et courtoises gens;
 Adieu beauté, leesse et tous deliz (rondel 552).¹⁶

[Farewell beauty, festivities and all pleasures,
 Singing, dancing and all amusements
 A hundred times.

Farewell Brussels, where the baths are beautiful,
 The bathtubs, the pleasant girls [here prostitutes];
 Farewell beauty, festivities and all pleasures
 Singing; dancing and all amusements.

Nice rooms, Rhine wine, and soft beds,
 Rabbits, birds, and hens and pheasants,
 Sweet company and courtly people;
 Farewell beauty, festivities and all pleasures.]

The poet enumerates and vividly describes the quality, the variety, and the excellence of the ‘services’ provided in the bathhouses he frequented while living in Brussels during the time of a diplomatic mission in the city. He identifies these moments of shared pleasures as an intrinsic part of the social fabric, a joyous and naughty cultural practice that encompasses much more than the mere hygienic necessity of the bath.¹⁷ Moments like the ones described by Eustache Deschamps can be found in numerous literary or iconographic depictions, scenes that could turn into amorous exchanges confirming thus that the use of water was often exploited for pleasure as well.¹⁸ But the combination of the fulminating sermons of clerics and the fear of contagion by the Black Death, which had stirred in the population, was certainly responsible for the closing of many public bathhouses in France by the mid-fourteenth century.

¹⁶ Œuvres complètes de Eustache Deschamps, ed. Marquis De Queux de Saint-Hilaire (Paris: Librairie de Firmin Didot, 1884), 6.

¹⁷ Oayk Négrier, *Les Bains à travers les âges* (Paris: Librairie de la construction moderne, 1925), 124–45. In the romance of Gérard of Nevers, or romance of *La Violette* (mid fourteenth century), although a later example, the heroine, the beautiful Euriant, takes a bath every week.

¹⁸ Jean-Pierre Leguay, *L'Eau dans la ville au Moyen Âge* (see note 10), 229. Bath scenes can either depict the bath as prelude to more intimate relations between lovers or as the bath offered to knights as a rite of welcome, or simply as the every day ablutions.

However, their rapid disappearance in a few decades should not be connected, according to the French sociologist Georges Vigarello,¹⁹ with a setback in hygiene practices even though, as he confirms, bathhouses became a rare commodity in most French towns by the end of the sixteenth century.²⁰ The connection to hygiene had been slowly evolving since the Middle Ages, and by the seventeenth century, Vigarello notes, the perception of cleanliness was no longer correlated to the use of water and soap. The image projected unto others from this point forward was one in which hygiene was associated with personal appearance and smell.

Indeed, the wearing of clean clothes and the use of perfumes supplanted previous rules of hygiene. But more importantly, white garments became emblematic of cleanliness, a visible sign for those who could afford changing clothes as often as needed in order to maintain a clean appearance. Thus, the size of one's wardrobe in relation to one's financial status was warrant of proper hygiene.²¹ In this new state of mind, water was henceforth dissociated from cleanliness for a vast majority of the population.

But until the fateful days of the Black Death, the medieval population continued to enjoy bathing for a number of reasons: hygiene, indulgence, therapeutic, etc.²² Pleasure indeed motivates the lovers in *Flamenca* to use the mineral spring baths of the city of Bourbon-l'Archambault as the ideal pretext to meet secretly without arousing any suspicion in the eye of the jealous husband, whereas in the *lai* of "Equitan," a violent love triangle with a dark side, the lovers plot the murder of the husband by using the bathtub as an instrument of death: their intention is to lure the victim into a bath filled with boiling water to scald him to death. Thus, the death of the seneschal, appearing as an accident, will allow the lovers to marry.

In these two very distinct literary texts, the *lai*, succinct and with limited descriptions specially about bathing and bloodletting, and the romance, a fully-fledged novel in verse that provides a trove of details about the mineral springs,

¹⁹ Georges Vigarello, *Le Propre et le sale: L'hygiène du corps depuis le Moyen Age* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1985), 31.

²⁰ Georges Vigarello, *Le Propre et le sale* (see note 19), 38.

²¹ Georges Vigarello, *Le Propre et le sale* (see note 19), 54.

²² Anne-Laure Lallouette, "Bains et soins du corps dans les textes médicaux (XII–XIV^e siècles)," *Laver, monder, blanchir: discours et usages de la toilette dans l'Occident médiéval*, ed. Sophie Albert (Paris: Presses de l'Université Paris-Sorbonne, 2006), 33–49; here 33. The multiplication of texts such as *Tractatus de conservatione vitae humanae* or *De Conservanda bona valetudine donne*, starting to appear in the twelfth century, attests to the increase of medical doctors' interest in the comfort and health of their patients.

the lovers nevertheless have one thing in common: they disregard the rules of courtly love and behave more like characters of a fabliau plotting either to trick the husband or worse, they attempt to get away with murder.

The *lai* of “Equitan”

In this *lai*, devoid of any magical elements, Equitan is a king mostly preoccupied with hunting, warfare, and pleasure. Intrigued, like Guilhem in *Flamenca*, by the high praises circulating in the kingdom about the extreme beauty of his seneschal’s wife, he travels to their castle full of desire for a woman he has not met yet. Unnamed in the *lai*, she is, indeed, like all of Marie de France’s female characters, pale, grey-eyed, golden-haired, and with an exquisite body and perfect manners. The king is immediately conquered: “Amour a fait de lui un des siens, il lui a decoche une fleche” (vv. 58–59; “Love has made him one of his own, it has shot him with an arrow”). He declares then: “... qu’il meurt d’amour pour elle” (v. 118; “... that he is dying of love for her”). He declares that she has his life in her hands, but the seneschal’s wife remains skeptical about the king’s love declaration since they are not of equal rank in society. Therefore, in order to turn the situation into her advantage, the clever woman uses all the trappings of courtly love to defend herself, alleging that succumbing to her king’s desires will lower her to the status of an object of desire without any counterpart. Utterly subjugated by her, the king submits himself to her, willingly accepting to be her vassal in the adulterous relationship. And though, as Sharon Kinoshita argues, the lady wants parity in the amorous relation,²³ an exchange of power takes place in the relationship: she becomes the one in control, a situation that constitutes a reversal of courtly love ‘etiquette.’ Dominated by a desire he does not control, the king surrenders to the woman’s request although he admits that falling in love with the wife of his seneschal is not a courtly behavior in his position.

With the intention to meet his lover without arousing the suspicion of her husband, the king devises to retreat to his bedroom to be bled, a procedure that will allow the lovers to see each other without restraint:

li reis faiseit dire a sa gent
que seigniez ert priveement.
Li us des chambres furent clos (vv. 193–95).

²³ Sharon Kinoshita, “Adultery and Kingship in Marie de France’s *Equitan*,” *Medieval Studies* 16 (1999): 41–48; here 44.

[the king asked that his entourage be told
that he was to be bled in private.
The doors to his rooms were closed.]

The bath he takes after the bleeding is, according to Mathilde Grodet, recognized for its medical virtues as it complements the benefits of the bleeding.²⁴ This common practice constitutes an excellent pretext for Equitan since he can isolate himself from society during a couple of days and enjoy the company of his seneschal's wife. But his new passion weakens his position of power as the simulation he submits himself transforms him in ways he has not expected. First, he accepts to be in an inferior position in the adulterous relationship with a woman of lower social status, and secondly, he trades positions with his seneschal who then takes over the state's affairs. The latter is a dangerous exchange since he leaves all authority in the hands of a man he his betraying.

Who benefits the most from these exchanges? Enmeshed in a dangerous relationship and clearly unsatisfied with the arrangements imposed by the limitations and frustration of a secret relation, the seneschal's wife presses the king to take their relationship to a different level and marry her. But, in order to make it possible, the king is asked to help her in the planning of the murder of her husband:

a sun seignur que morz sereit;
legier sereit a purchacier,
pur ceo qu'il l'en volsist aidier.
Il li respunt que si fera;
ja cele rien ne li dirra,
que il ne face a sun poeir (vv. 240–45)

[the death of her husband;
would be an easy enterprise,
if he would be willing to help her.
He answered that he would;
He agreed to all she would ask,
he would do his best]

²⁴ Mathilde Grodet, “L’Eau et le sang: bains délicieux, bains périlleux dans quelques écrits des XIIe et XIIIe siècles,” *Laver, monder, blanchir: discours et usages de la toilette dans l’Occident médiéval*, ed. Sophie Albert (Paris: Presses de l’Université Paris-Sorbonne, 2006), 85–98; here 87. The same stratagem is also found in the fabliau “La Saineresse” in *Recueil général et complet des fabliaux des XIIIe et XIVe siècles*, ed. Anatole de Montaiglon and Gaston Raynaud (Paris: Librairie des Bibliophiles, 1872).

The lovers plot the accidental death of the husband by luring the trusting man into a bathtub full of boiling water. The plan is thus to invite the seneschal to a hunting party, which will be followed by the drawing of blood, and an ensuing warm bath in company of the king. The seneschal's wife takes charge of the logistics. She prepares two baths one with warm water for the king and the second one with boiling water for her husband:

E jeo ferai les bains temprer
 e les dous cuves aporter.
 Sun bain ferai chalt e buillant;
 suz ciel nen a hume vivant,
 ne seit eschaldez e malmis,
 einz que dedenz se seit asis (vv. 257–62).

[I will have the water of the baths heated
 and prepare the two tubs.
 I will have the water of his bath boiling,
 anyone would be scalded and burnt;
 even before sitting down in the tub.]

The two tubs are placed in front of the bed in the king's chamber, but the seneschal who has played a passive role up to that point in the narration unexpectedly stumbles upon the lovers. Ashamed to be found in such a delicate position, the king “Pur sa vleinie covrir” (v. 300); he [the king] “tries to cover his shame”) jumps into one of the tubs, the one with boiling water and dies. Immediately after, the seneschal throws his wife headfirst into the same waters condemning her to die like her lover.

While Marie de France emphasizes noble deeds and “courtliness” of the lords of Britanny at the beginning of the *lai*:

Mult unt esté noble barun
 cil de Bretaigne, li Bretun.
 Jadis suleient par pruësce,
 par curteisie e par noblesce (vv. 1–4)

[They were noble barons
 the lords of Britanny, the Britons.
 They had in the past, a custom which was witness their valor,
 their courtliness and their nobility.]

“Equitan” is the only of her *lais* to end with a moral condemning this specific adulterous relationship:

Ici pureit ensample prendre:
 tels purchace le mal d'autrui,
 dunt tuz li mals revert sur lui. (vv. 314–16)

[one could learn a lesson from this tale:
 the one who wants to make another miserable,
 sees misery fall back on him.]

And although she has but praises for a king at first, his total surrender to passion, a desire that drives him to neglect his royal obligations, and therefore threatens his succession to the throne, prompts Marie de France to censure his uncourtly behavior.²⁵ She condemns the illicit relation in which the king plans to commit a murder, an act she names a “vilenie” (v. 300) (“shameful act”).

The Romance of *Flamenca*

The anti-courtly love romance of *Flamenca* starts and ends with the theme of the song “la mal mariée,”²⁶ bad auspices for the marriage that is to be celebrated at the beginning of the narration between Archimbaut and Flamenca. The description of the young bride’s beauty and character corresponds in all aspects to the medieval canon, but Archimbaut’s personality predicts trouble: his love for Flamenca is an overwhelming passion that even his chivalric demeanor will not be able to control or hide. His jealousy, fueled by the admiration Flamenca’s beauty exerts, will transform him into a violent and possessive husband.

The seemingly harmless scene of the tournament as part of the marriage festivities will act as a trigger: as a token of courtly conduct, the king attaches one of Flamenca’s sleeves to his lance sealing therefore Flamenca’s fate in the eyes of her husband. Misinterpreting the gesture as a sign of seduction, Archimbaut locks up his wife in a tower²⁷ at the closing of the festivities to prevent adultery.

²⁵ Sharon Kinoshita and Peggy McCracken, *Marie de France: A Critical Companion*. Gallica, 24 (Woodbridge, Suffolk: D. S. Brewer: D. S. Brewer, 2012), 3. Since she dedicates her lais to a noble king whom most scholars identify as Henry II, it might signal her strong condemnation of such behavior.

²⁶ See Pierre Bec, “Trobairitz et chansons de femme. Contribution à la connaissance du lyrisme féminin au Moyen Age,” *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale* 22.3 (1979): 235–62.

²⁷ The theme of the imprisoned wife by a jealous husband is also found in another *lai* of Marie de France, the *lai* of “Guigemar” in which a young woman is locked in a room by her old husband fearing to be supplanted by a young knight.

Thus, for a period of two years, Flamenca's world is reduced to the size of her room in a tower with her husband as sole visitor. Her interactions with the outside world are limited to the short trips to the church to attend mass on Sundays and on religious holidays. At every moment, she remains under his constant surveillance since he fears being cuckolded. His obsession is such that he no longer takes care of his personal appearance:

Quar unquas, pueis que mollier pres,
No-s bainet ne-il vene neis em pes,
Ni-s resonet unglia ni pel (vv. 1549–51).

[Never, since he got married,
had he taken a bath;
The idea had not even occurred to him
He had not clipped his nails or cut his hair.]

He declares to Flamenca's lady-in-waiting that his rough physical appearance, comparable to the reputed frightful appearance and anti-social behavior of the wild man,²⁸ is the result of his obsession and constant surveillance of his wife to prevent her from taking a lover. Therefore, he no longer takes proper care of himself. Unjustly confined, Flamenca's personality also changes considerably; the careless and joyous beautiful young woman turns into a helpless and desperate wife waiting for a man, a hero willing to free her from a tyrannical husband she can no longer respect.

The news of the sudden and forced reclusion of the bride after magnificent marriage festivities rapidly spreads to other towns. Upon hearing the misfortune of the beautiful young Flamenca and eager to embark on a new adventure to prove his valor,²⁹ a young knight named Guilhem of Nevers rises to the challenge and travels to Bourbon-l'Archimbaud to free the woman he already loves. In this tale, the anonymous author uses an historical background, borrowing existing local names for his characters, maybe for accuracy, but to give his romance a more realistic touch. The story unfolds thus in a city more reputed for its sulfur waters, mineral springs that have been in use since the Roman period.³⁰

28 See Claude Gaignebet and Jean-Dominique Lajoux, *Art profane et religion populaire au Moyen Age* (Vendôme: Presses Universitaires de France, 1985), 92–95.

29 Georges Duby, *Le Chevalier, la femme et le prêtre* (Paris: Hachette, 1981), 239. The years of youth are considered a predatory period for young knights.

30 See Marie Guérin-Beauvois and Jean-Marie Martin, *Bains curatifs et bains hygiéniques en Italie de l'Antiquité au Moyen Age*, ed. Marie Guérin-Beauvois and Jean-Marie Martin (Rome: De l'Ecole française de Rome, 2007). A great number of spring baths used during antiquity have

Bourbon-l'Archambault is not the typical setting for chivalric exploits and romance, but rather a place more suitable for sick travelers in search of a cure for their failing health. The reputation of its springs attracts people from all regions of France and even from beyond its borders:

Quar de Franssa e de Bergoina
 E de Flandris e de Campaina,
 De Normandia e de Bretaina
 I ac assas homes estrains
 Que-i eron vengut per los bains (vv. 3796–800).

[As from Ile-de-France and from Burgundy
 from Flanders and Champagne,
 from Normandy and Brittany,
 they come for the waters.]

It is for the healing powers of the sulfur waters of the mineral springs that women with certain gynecological disorders come for treatment, while others come in search of a cure or are simply looking for some relief in cases of rheumatic arthritis. The author sums up these illnesses in a very cavalier manner³¹:

E no-i venia rancs ni clops
 Que totz gueritz no s'en tornes
 Si lo perque i demores (vv. 1468–70).

[No lame or crippled people came
 who left without being completely cured
 if they stayed the necessary length of time.]

The rhythm of life in the city is thus regulated by the coming and going of men and women to and from the activities related to their course of treatment.³² Descriptions of the many different thermal springs are very detailed, and, as the author specifies, a sign is posted in front of each spring indicating the properties of its waters in order to facilitate the choice among the many springs available:

continued to be used during the Middle Ages and even today. See also *The Nature and Function of Water, Baths, Bathing and Hygiene from Antiquity through the Renaissance*, ed. Cynthia Kosso and Anne Scott. *Technology and Change in History*, 11 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2009). Cf. also the contributions to this volume by David Tomíček and by Thomas G. Benedek.

³¹ Marilyn Nicoud, “Les Médecins italiens et le bain thermal à la fin du Moyen Age,” *Médiévaux* 43 (2002): 13–40; here 16.

³² Marie Guérin-Beauvois and Jean-Marie Martin, *Bains curatifs et bains hygiéniques en Italie* (see note 28), 2.

En cascun bain pogras trobar
 Escriv a que avia obs (vv. 1466–67).

[In each bath you could have seen
 written which maladies could be cured there;]

The author's description of the mineral springs is so realistic that, as Gérard Gouiran notes, the description can in fact be read as a brochure for thermal springs.³³ A multitude of details about the springs are provided: each one of them has its own private bath with hot and cold water and each one has a few adjoining rooms to rest in after the treatment.

On his arrival at the house of his host, Peyre Guyon, Guilhem hides the real purpose of his presence in the city, and instead assumes the identity of an ill cleric in need of treatment. It is in ambiguous terms that he describes the symptoms of his illness: “quar un mal ai que mi destrein” (v. 1984; I suffer from a sickness that torments me”). Under the disguise of a cleric, Guilhem is thus able to approach and communicate, although in very brief terms, with Flamenca while attending a church service, the only public space her husband allows her to frequent. During mass, Guilhem utters the word “Ai las!” (v. 3949); “alas,” the first of a series of very short interjections he will exchange with her without arousing suspicion. They have to communicate briefly, in fact a mere couple of words at a time, to dispel the husband's constant surveillance. At such a slow pace, it takes them months of sibylline exchanges and an incredible amount of patience to reach the moment where Flamenca accepts to meet Guilhem by saying: “Plas mi” (v. 5721; It pleases me). During their long and cautious courting period, passion is absent; we are in the presence of lovers who no longer show signs of impatience. Flamenca, after the long months of isolation devoid of social interactions, has become a cunning and manipulative woman eager to take full advantage of a situation that will free herself from Archimbaut. Her brief moments of interaction with the young man have convinced her that she is entitled to commit adultery since her husband has wronged her. She is therefore about to reclaim her life from a man she no longer loves, respects and fears.

Interestingly, the hero she has been waiting for to free her from a possessive jailor is absent from the narration during the first third of the romance, which can be seen as an indication that Flamenca is in fact the hero, the main character,

³³ Gérard Gouiran, “L’Odeur du soufre dans les eaux thermales à propos de *Flamenca* et de textes médiévaux non littéraires,” *L’eau au Moyen Âge*. Senefiance, 15 (1985); here quoted from the online version at <http://books.openedition.org/pup/2942,7> (last accessed on February 1, 2016), 1–25; here 3.

although paradoxically she has no control of the situation until the young knight appears in the church.

Guilhem devises a plan to bring Flamenca to his room. He has indeed noticed that all the thermal spring baths in Bourbon-l'Archambault are located underground, and since Flamenca frequents the same mineral springs, he hires a couple of workers to dig a tunnel to connect his room to the spring where Flamenca will come to take a bath.

The baths, which belong to Peire Guyon, are exclusively reserved to people with financial means: they are described as luxurious:

Uns n'i ac plus belz e plus rix:
Cels de cui ero fo amix
De N'Archimbaut e fort privatz (vv. 1485–87).

[One of the establishments was more luxurious and more sumptuous than the others; it belonged to a very close friend of Archambault ...]

And to keep them clean and to prevent any possible contagion, the tubs are scrubbed after every single use:

L'ostes ac nom Peire Guizo
E tenc sos bains mout ben garnitz
E ben escobat e politz (vv. 1490–92).

[The host's name was Peire Guizo
and he spent a lot of money to maintain his baths,
which were extremely clean and well equipped.]

But before the lovers finally meet in the knight's room, Guilhem has to wait for the propitious moment, a decision he leaves to Flamenca. The shrewd manipulator she has become has no difficulty in convincing her husband that she needs to go to the thermal springs by alleging to suffer from an illness in ambiguous terms:

“Sener, al cor ai una gota
Que m'auci e m'afolla tota,
E cug que d'aquest (mal) morrai
(...) – Bel sener cars, autra vegada
D'aquesta gota mi senti,
Mas quan mí bainhei ne garí (vv. 5671–80).

[Sire, I have in my heart a drop,
That is killing me and eating away at me
And I think that I will die from it
(...) Dear sire I have suffered from this drop in the past
But when I bathed in the thermal baths I was cured.]

She requests permission to visit the baths, a room now with a secret passage leading directly to Guilhem's bedroom. Flamenca coldly decides to wait for the appropriate moment to take a bath in the mineral springs, a moment which, according to astrology, has to be on the day of the new moon:

E per so bainnar mi volria,
 Seiner, dimercres, si-us plazia,
 Que-l luna es a recontorn:
 Mas quan seran passat, iii. jorn
 E il sera del tot fermada,
 E ieu serai plus melhurada (vv. 5681–86).

[That is why I would like to take a bath
 my lord, on Wednesday, if it pleases you,
 Because it is the new moon:
 But in three days the moon will have returned to its form
 And I will be relieved.]

She maintains that the effectiveness of the bath increases as the moon increases, thus bathing for therapeutic purposes is, according to her beliefs, governed by the phases of the moon, which are in harmony with the body's vital flux.³⁴ Although she does not suffer from any real ailment, she nevertheless respects and follows the proper rules. Guilhem also carefully chooses the day of his baths for the treatment of his mysterious illness. He informs his host that:

“... Oi no-m voil bainar,
 Car trop es sus en la kalenda,
 E ben es ques eu m'en atenda;
 E-l luna sera dema nona
 E bainar m'ai en hora bona” (vv. 3256–60).

[“...I do not want to take a bath today [answered Guillem]
 because it is too close to the beginning of the month, ...
 tomorrow will be the ninth day of this moon
 and it will be the suitable moment to bathe.”]

In his case the bath has to be taken during the first quarter of the moon in order to have a propitious effect on his health. Both Flamenca and Guilhem express some knowledge about the connection between bathing and the celestial bodies. On the contrary, Marie de France gives no specifics about the frequency and the particulars of Equitan's bloodletting sessions. According to medieval medical

³⁴ Gérard Gouiran, *L'Odeur du soufre* (see note 31), 21.

almanacs the full moon is considered to be an effective and propitious moment to draw blood.³⁵

It takes Guilhem and Flamenca months of preparation for their intimate meeting, but curiously enough, once they have enjoyed intimacy, there is no longer talk about their passion. Flamenca returns to her husband who, by the end of the narration, is no longer the extremely jealous husband he used to be. He has turned back into the courtly knight he was at the beginning of the romance.

Conclusion

In these two anti-courtly tales of illicit love, the authors broach the theme of adultery in a very different manner; while in the *lai* of “Equitan” both lovers die as they attempt to kill the husband to be free to marry, in *Flamenca* libertinage is praised and the husband is but ridiculed from the first day of the marriage.³⁶ Nevertheless, it is in similarly negative terms that both adulterous male characters, Equitan and Guilhem, are portrayed on several occasions, along with the two beautiful women, the seneschal’s wife and Flamenca, presented in the narratives as opportunistic deceivers.³⁷ Adultery, dissimulation, simulation, and the subsequent transformation the two men experience, intersect and turn the tales into satires of courtly love.

Bath scenes, either in a private setting in “Equitan” or in thermal springs in the case of *Flamenca*, not only are crucial elements of the adultery plot, but moreover they provide an excellent opportunity to depict common practices of hygiene and well-being among members of a higher social class. The use of thermal springs in search of a cure or simply to alleviate certain types of ailments is especially well documented in the romance of *Flamenca*. Indeed, the detailed and precise descriptions of the springs of Bourbon given by the anonymous author show that he is well informed about the properties of its sulfur waters, which are still reputed in today’s France.³⁸

³⁵ Laurence Moulinier, *Le Sang au Moyen Age* (see note 4), 4. The *calendaria* underscore the necessity to observe *tempora debite*.

³⁶ Rita Lejeune, review of Ulrich Gschwind, *Le «Roman de Flamenca»: nouvelle occitane du XIIIe siècle.* («*Romanica Helvetica*» 86 A and B) (Bern: Francke, 1976), in *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale* 91 (1980): 259–61; here 261.

³⁷ See Sharon Kinoshita, “Cherchez la Femme: Feminist Criticism and Marie de France Lai de *Lanval*,” *Romance Notes* 34 (1999): 263–73.

³⁸ Gérard Gouiran, *L’Odeur du soufre* (see note 31), 5.

In addition to the practice of bathing, the custom of letting blood as a mean of draining the body of its excesses³⁹ is practiced by the king Equitan on a regular basis. And although Marie de France only mentions the practice without providing any further details, it nevertheless offers the reader insight into a medieval custom that goes back to Greek antiquity and that persisted well into the nineteenth century.⁴⁰ Bloodletting was unquestionably, as Nancy Siraisi suggests, one of the most frequently used forms of general therapy to draw off corrupt matter from the body.⁴¹

Both activities, bathing and bloodletting, are only two examples among many other literary ones from the medieval period, but they attest and provide evidence of these medieval practices among men and women of a privileged milieu. But, in addition to those who could afford a bath in the comfort of their home, the high number of public baths in cities and towns contribute to dispel the popular misconception about the unsanitary living conditions during the Middle Ages. And, as the sociologist George Vigarello stresses, the Middle Ages had inherited and maintained common hygiene practices from the Roman period. The fear of water will appear gradually and become a prevalent factor of poor hygiene only by the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth century.

39 For the humoral theory, see Nancy G. Siraisi, *Medieval & Early Renaissance Medicine* (see note 4), 104–106. See also the contribution to this volume by Debra L. Stoudt.

40 Nancy G. Siraisi, *Medieval & Early Renaissance Medicine* (see note 4), 97.

41 Nancy G. Siraisi, *Medieval & Early Renaissance Medicine* (see note 4), 139–40. The theory of the four humors was inherited from the ancient Greek philosophers Aristotle, Hippocrates, and Galen: each one of the four humors, contained in blood, was capable of being transformed by disordered complexion into a harmful secondary humor that had to be removed if the patient was to recover. See also the contribution to this volume by Thomas G. Benedek.

Christopher R. Clason

The Liquids in Gottfried's *Tristan und Isolde*: Focus of Nature and Locus of Illness and Healing

There are few medieval works in which water and other liquids play as important a role as they do in Gottfried von Straßburg's *Tristan und Isolde*.¹ Most of the significant actions in the text involve liquids to some degree.² Not only do poisons, cures, and potions provide essential motivators for focusing the plot action, they also offer a means of communication between the lovers, and furthermore establish one of the three major spaces of the epic action, on a level with the other two major settings, namely the Cornish courtly environment, and the natural surroundings of the forest together with the Cave of the Lovers, the *minnegrotte*. In most instances, poisonous or curative liquids function independently of human intention or logic, and seem instead to represent an autonomous and more powerful "will" that ultimately holds greater influence in how events proceed. In most

¹ While the body of critical literature on Gottfried's *Tristan* is enormous, there are several important bibliographic works that are especially helpful as guides through the labyrinth of research: Reiner Dietz, *Der Tristan Gottfrieds von Straßburg: Probleme der Forschung* (1902–1970). Göppinger Arbeiten zur Germanistik, 136 (Göppingen: Kümmerle, 1974); Hans–Hugo Steinhoff, *Bibliographie zu Gottfried von Straßburg II. Berichtszeitraum 1970–1983* (Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 1986); Gottfried Weber, *Gottfried von Straßburg*, 5th ed., updated by Werner Hoffmann (1962; Stuttgart: Metzler, 1981); Christoph Huber, *Gottfried von Straßburg: Tristan. Klassiker–Lektüren*, 3 (Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 2000); Tomas Tomasek, *Gottfried von Straßburg*. Reclams Universal-Bibliothek, 17665 (Stuttgart: Reclam, 2007); and the journal *Tristania*, which regularly updated research trends through 2010, terminating with vol. 25.

² Virtually all major studies of Gottfried's epic treat liquids to some extent; see for example, W. T. H. Jackson, *The Anatomy of Love: The Tristan of Gottfried von Strassburg* (New York and London: Columbia Univ. Press, 1971) 84–91; Tomas Tomasek, *Die Utopie im "Tristan" Gotfrids von Straßburg*. Hermaea: Germanistische Forschungen, Neue Folge, 49 (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1985); Hugo Bekker, *Gottfried von Strassburg's Tristan: Journey through the Realm of Eros*. Studies in German Literature, Linguistics and Culture, 29 (Columbia, SC: Camden House, 1987), 141–42, 163–79, 213–23; Alois Wolf, *Gottfried von Strassburg und die Mythe von Tristan und Isolde* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1989), 179–90; Albrecht Classen, *Verzweiflung und Hoffnung: Die Suche nach der kommunikativen Gemeinschaft in der deutschen Literatur des Mittelalters*. Beihefte zur Mediaevistik, 1 (Frankfurt a. M. and New York: Peter Lang, 2002), 288–89, 349, 353.

Christopher R. Clason, Oakland University, Rochester, Michigan

instances, the primary objective of the liquid (whether as object or as medium for communication or travel) is to ensure the lovers' health or well-being.

In other situations, almost paradoxically, liquids produce illness, and ultimately play a crucial part in the lovers' deaths. However, a closer examination of how liquids operate on various symbolic levels reveals that Gottfried's imaginative development of profound, thematic issues resolves many of the contradictions through his representation of liquids and watery environments.

In this essay I would like to emphasize the active workings of liquid substances in Gottfried's *Tristan*, and how they contribute to the role of nature in inflicting illness and healing it. In its three-fold function (object, communicative medium, environment), liquid substance foregrounds the natural world 1) as a source of both wounding and curing, and 2) as an environmental determiner for experiences of the lovers' disease and recovery, presenting the characters with an authentic, material ecology, including all its physical advantages and problems, with which they must reckon or against which they must struggle.

Water as Dynamic Environment: Transportation, Danger and Deliverance

Situated on the northern coast of Cornwall, the castle Tintagel, site of King Mark's throne, bears a unique relationship to the sea. Although by land it is remote from the rest of the Arthurian realm, it is reachable by anyone in a boat sailing from the north or west. Thus, purely as a result of its natural, geographical situation, Tintagel is perhaps both more open to foreign influence and more exposed to hostile intrusion than the famous fictional court, Arthur's Camelot, to the east. Long before Tristan appears at his uncle's court, for example, Mark was vanquished in battle by the Irish king, who periodically sends his seneschal, Môrolt, brother of his wife, to Cornwall by sea in order to collect tribute: among the treasures he collects are precious metals as well as a specified number of young Cornish men to bring to Ireland as slaves. From the very beginning of the tale it appears that Mark's court maintains strong (although, in at least this case, oppressive) ties with foreign cultures as a direct result of its geographical position at the boundary separating the land from the sea.

Tristan's earliest years, even the time before his birth, are deeply influenced by association with the sea. His mother, Mark's sister Blanscheflûr, is pregnant with Tristan when she travels across the English Channel to Parmenie, the ancestral land of her husband, Riwalîn. Soon, however, Riwalîn perishes tragically, and Blanscheflûr's final act in life is giving birth to Tristan. After having been

thus orphaned and then raised in France by his father's Marshal, Rûal li Fointenant, Tristan is once again fated to cross the sea. When the boy has barely reached adolescence, Norwegian sailors, fascinated with the precocious and multitalented youth, kidnap him on board their merchant ship and set sail for their home. However, while they are underway a severe storm rises suddenly, and the terrified sailors, believing that the gale is divine retribution for their transgression and hoping to exculpate themselves, set Tristan adrift – coincidentally, at a point very near to Mark's Cornish realm.³ And so, the boy is able to float ashore, traversing the boundary between the two great natural spaces (the forest and the sea) that dominate the action of the narrative, and eventually to re-connect with his mother's family through this almost miraculous maritime event.

Water, in fact, becomes perhaps one of the two most significant environments – arguably second only to the *minnegrotte* – as well as the primary pathway for the important actions of Gottfried's epic poem.⁴ The significance of water (along with that of other liquids) comes strongly to the foreground when one considers that a large portion of the story takes place in, or is strongly connected to, aqueous space, and causes or catalyzes danger to, or diseases of, some characters, as well as their health and ultimately their survival or demise. As we have seen, this is particularly true of the coastal maritime environs of the tale, but not exclusively so; brooks, rivers, and even small pools of water serve as key spaces for actions, during which the characters encounter perils, fight enemies, suffer wounds, endure illnesses, or seek and receive cures. The water environment does not exist merely as backdrop, but also plays a dynamic role in virtually every instance where it appears. In *Tristan* liquids serve as active environmental media, functioning as both space and agent, leading to danger, illness and cure.

Môrolt's battle with Tristan provides a relatively early example from Gottfried's poem of the role water plays in creating a space of grave danger for the characters. The encounter is clearly reminiscent of the biblical duel between David and Goliath; Môrolt is virtually a giant, while Tristan, to all appearances, has almost no chance of success. In order to carry out their duel without the threat of unfair interference, Tristan insists that the two warriors must travel in

³ See Albrecht Classen, "Storms, Sea Crossings, the Challenges of Nature, and the Transformation of the Protagonist in Medieval and Renaissance Literature," *Neohelicon* 30 (2003): 163–82, who emphasizes that, through the storm at sea, God exercises His will and ensures that Tristan will return to his mother's people where his destiny will play out (169).

⁴ See Classen, "Storms, Sea Crossings, the Challenges of Nature, and the Transformation of the Protagonist in Medieval and Renaissance Literature" (see note 3), 166, who addresses: "the curious and widespread theme of crossing bodies of water or traveling over land which brings about profound effects, if not the radical transformation of the protagonist within the courtly world."

pontoon boats, each of sufficient buoyancy to carry one warrior in full armor and his horse, to a small island a short distance off the shore of Tintagel, where they can carry out their epic struggle in full sight of their supporters on the mainland. It is clear from the outset that the fight will be to the death, and water ensures it. When Tristan arrives at the island in his craft, he does something that perplexes his opponent:

... und also er ûz ze stade gestiez,
 sîn schiffelin er vliezen liez
 und saz ûf sîn ors iesâ.
 nu was ouch Môrolt iesâ dâ.
 “sag an” sprach er “waz tiutet daz,
 durch welhen list und umbe waz
 hâstû daz schif läzen gân?”
 “daz hân ich umbe daz getân:
 hie ist ein schif unde zwêne man,
 und enist ouch dâ kein zwîvel an,
 belîbent die niht beide hie,
 daz aber binamen ir einer ie
 ûf disem werde tôt beliget,
 sô hât ouch jener, der dâ gesiget,
 an disem einen genuoc,
 daz dich dâ her zem werde truoc.” (6791–6806)⁵

[When he had landed on the farther shore he set his craft adrift and quickly mounted his charger. Morold was there in an instant. “Tell me,” asked Morold, “what does this mean, what had you in mind when you set your boat adrift?” “I did it for this reason. Here are two men and a boat. It is certain that unless both fall one of them will be killed, so that the victor’s needs will be met by this one boat which brought you to the island.” (132)]⁶

While Tristan’s youthful bravado is impressive, it is clear that he is in mortal danger. On one level, the water cuts him off from any hope of saving his skin, should Môrolt manage to disarm him during the fight. On another level, the act places the battle metaphorically into a unique category of experience; it becomes mythical, set-off from the “real” world by water, unreachable by those on the mainland but laden with meaning for the spectators supporting each side. Should

⁵ Middle High German text taken from Gottfried von Strassburg, *Tristan*, ed. by Friedrich Ranke, re-edited and trans. into New High German by Rüdiger Krohn, 3 vols. (1980; Stuttgart: Reclam, 1983), with line references in parentheses.

⁶ English translation text taken from Gottfried von Strassburg, *Tristan: with the ‘Tristan’ of Thomas*, trans. by A. T. Hatto (London, New York, et al.: Penguin, 1967), with page references given in parentheses.

Môrolt prevail, the cruel collection of tribute from Mark's court would continue; but if Tristan should triumph, the entire kingdom of Cornwall would be liberated from its burden. Like other incidents in works from the Middle Ages, two antagonists duel as representatives of their people, and stake everything on the results of the contest.⁷ Whether he wins or loses, Tristan's action of pushing the boat away from shore and out into the open ocean "mythicizes" the scene, making it clear that the battle will be to the finish, and the watery boundary ensures that there will be no chance of escape for either combatant.

Of course, as we know only too well, Tristan defeats Môrolt, thereby freeing Cornwall from the tyranny of Ireland. However, he is wounded: the Irish warrior's sword blade is coated in a deadly poison, and with it Môrolt delivers a possibly fatal gash to young Tristan's thigh, just before the Cornish hero is able to strike a terrible blow to Môrolt's head, killing his adversary while leaving a shard of his sword in the Irishman's skull. The reader is aware of the seriousness of Tristan's wound, but the young warrior only knows that he is bleeding and feeling unwell. When he returns to the mainland in the single remaining pontoon boat and meets the onlookers at the beach, his instinctive reaction is to conceal from Môrolt's men the fact that he has been wounded. The mythic image of young Tristan, a conquering hero, sitting in a boat at the beach, and delivering a warning to the departing foreigners about future incursions against Cornwall, would perhaps have seemed less impressive had he revealed his wound. The battle launches the next significant plot action (i.e., his wound is potentially deadly, and Tristan will soon need to embark on a quest to be healed or he will die). At the same time, several important elements coalesce in the scene and forecast a number of future thematic issues: Tristan's joy (the victory) is mixed with sorrow (his injury), as his love affair with Isolde the Fair will mix bliss with torment; his deceptive performance⁸ (hiding his wound) will ensure his continued survival, just as decep-

7 For example, "Das Hildebrandslied," in which a father and his son must do battle as representatives of their respective armies to decide which side will be victorious; see Werner Hoffmann, "Das Hildebrandslied und die indogermanischen Vater-Sohn-Kampf-Dichtungen," *Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Literatur* 92 (1970): 26–42; see also Rachel E. Kellett, *Single Combat and Warfare in German Literature of the High Middle Ages: Stricker's "Karl der Große" and "Daniel von dem Blühenden Tal."* MHRA Texts and Dissertations, 72; Bithell Series of Dissertations, 33 (London: Maney, 2008), 5–32, who examines the representation of similar kinds of duels in works by "Der Stricker." See now Sarah Neumann, *Der gerichtliche Zweikampf: Gottesurteil – Wettstreit – Ehrensache.* Mittelalter-Forschungen, 31 (Ostfildern: Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 2010), 78–81.

8 Regarding "performance" as a primary *modus* of behavior for Tristan and Isolde, see Will Hasty, "Performances of Love: Tristan and Isolde at Court," *A Companion to Gottfried von Strass-*

tion and dissemblance will help to sustain the affair with his beloved later in the tale; and once again, in the boat at the beach, he finds himself at the boundary between the sea and the land, at the borderline that often signifies for Tristan the passage between the mythic and the mundane.

Although the wisest and most proficient medical practitioners of Mark's realm try their best to cure Tristan, the wound does not heal, and his health deteriorates rapidly. Based on what Môrolt had told him before Tristan slew his formidable adversary, only the Queen of Ireland, renowned for both her wisdom and knowledge of potions, medicines, and other secrets of nature, can heal him, and so he and Mark determine that Tristan and his mentor Curvenal, with only a few men to accompany them, would secretly set sail for Dublin and seek a cure. Upon arrival in the proximity of Dublin harbor, they drop anchor; Tristan has his loyal friend dress him in old rags and place him in a skiff:

sîne harpfen hiez er och dar ân
und in der mâze spîse geben,
daz er ir möhete geleben
drî tago oder viere ...
sus kêhrten sî mit maneger clage
und mit manegem jâmer hin.
mit manegem trahene liezen s'in
swebende ûf dem wilden sê ...
Tristan beleip al eine dâ.
der swebete dâ wâ unde wâ
mit jâmer und mit sorgen
unz an den liechten morgen. (7426–29, 7490–93, 7503–06)

[He also told them to place his harp inside it and food enough to sustain him for three or four days And so they drew away with much grief and lamenting and, shedding many a tear, left him adrift on the stormy sea ... Tristan remained there alone, drifting to and fro, in misery and anguish, till the bright morning came. (140–41)]

Although in this scene nature perhaps does not play as miraculous a part as it does in other versions of the tale,⁹ the sea nevertheless serves in a most significant

burg's "Tristan," ed. Will Hasty. *Studies in German Literature, Linguistics, and Culture* (Rochester, NY, and Woodbridge, UK: Camden House, 2003), 159–81.

⁹ See, for example, *The Romance of Tristan by Beroul and the Tale of Tristan's Madness*, trans. Alan S. Fedrick (London, New York, et al.: Penguin, 1970), 41–42; in the reconstructions of likely earlier versions of the tale developed by the early twentieth-century French scholar Joseph Bédier and summarized at the beginning of this edition of the Beroul text, Tristan accomplishes his journey from Cornwall to Dublin completely alone in the skiff, without sail or oars, and only with

way, not only to disguise him as *not* the slayer of Môrolt, the brother of the woman who, he hopes, is going to heal him, but also from the perspective of the Dubliners who find him floating into their harbor as a kind of “natural wonder.” Like other mythic figures (e.g., Moses, Romulus and Remus, etc.)¹⁰ Tristan becomes a foundling from a watery realm, and adds significantly to his mythic reputation by also playing his harp, the melodic strains of which one can perceive even before his human form is visible to others:

die boten die kôrten iesâ dar.
 nu sî begunden nâhen
 und dannoch nieman sâhen,
 nu gehôrten s'al dort her
 suoze unde nâch ir herzen ger
 eine süeze harpfen clingen
 und mit der harpfen singen
 einen man sô rehte suoze,
 daz sîz in z'eime gruoze
 und ze âventure nâmen
 und von der stat nie kâmen,
 die wile er harpfete unde sanc. (7512–23)

[Messengers repaired there at once. And now that they were approaching and nevertheless failed to see anyone they heard the sweet strains of a harp float out to them, softly and to their hearts' delight, and, accompanying it, a man sing so enchantingly that they took it for a greeting most marvelous and rare, and were rooted to the spot as long as he harped and sang. (141)]

his harp to accompany him; the sea works miraculously to convey the wounded hero, without any means of navigation or propulsion, to precisely the correct geographical location, in order that he be found and healed, thus fulfilling the clear “will of nature” in an astounding manner.

10 There is a wealth of critical literature on the Tristan “myth,” including Alois Wolf, *Gottfried von Strassburg und die Mythe von Tristan und Isolde* (see note 2); and Rüdiger Krohn, “Gottfried von Strassburg and the Tristan Myth,” trans. Will Hasty, *German Literature of the High Middle Ages*, ed. Will Hasty. The Camden House History of German Literature, 3 (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2006), 55–73; regarding specifically classical myth in Gottfried’s *Tristan*, see Nancy W. Nolte, “The Classical Allusions in Gottfried von Strassburg’s *Tristan*,” *The Influence of the Classical World on Medieval Literature, Architecture, Music, and Culture*, ed. Fidel Fajardo-Acosta and Edward Peter Nolan (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen, 1992), 144–53; and Alois Wolf, “Humanism in the High Middle Ages: The Case of Gottfried’s *Tristan*,” *A Companion to Gottfried von Strassburg’s “Tristan,”* (see note 8), 23–54; see also C. Stephen Jaeger, *Medieval Humanism in Gottfried von Strassburg’s *Tristan und Isolde**. Germanische Bibliothek. 2. Abt.: Untersuchungen und Texte. Reihe 3: Untersuchungen und Einzeldarstellungen (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 1977).

When the local populace discovers there is in fact a human being in the boat, who calls himself “Tantris” and plays beautiful music, but who appears destitute and on the verge of death, they bring the skiff to land and him to their Queen Isolde, wife of the Irish King Gurmûn and mother of Isolde the Fair, who is skilled in potions and the healing arts – and we may assume that she also prepared the very poison that coated Môrolt’s sword and has been plaguing Tristan since his wounding, although she does not recognize Tristan’s agony as partly her handiwork. Not only is she confident that she will be able to cure him, but, since he is proficient in speaking numerous foreign languages and in playing a variety of stringed instruments, the queen commissions “Tantris” to tutor her daughter, as part of the negotiation for his cure. Water thus plays a most significant role in situating Tristan where he can demonstrate his artistic talents and employ his cunning, in order to be healed from a life-threatening malady. At the same time, the sea brings him into first contact with his beloved, Isolde the Fair, which to a far greater degree will endanger both of their lives, but will also heal them – a mysterious characteristic of true love that permeates this work from beginning to end. One recalls the famous and fateful lines of Gottfried’s prologue, where he states:

Deist aller edelen herzen brôt.
 hie mite sô lebet ir beider tôt.
 wir lesen ir leben, wir lesen ir tôt
 und ist uns daz süeze also brôt. (233–36)

[This is bread to all noble hearts. With this their death lives on. We read their life, we read their death, and to us it is sweet as bread. (44)]

The sea becomes the passageway by which the two lovers come together and can fall in love, a situation that will ultimately lead to their death. But their love is also their life, and for the reader who sensitively engages with the poem (according to Gottfried’s prologue), the experience is like bread, a substance that for medieval Christians physically nurtures the body as well as constitutes the spiritual medium of the Eucharist.¹¹ Thus, two essential results ensue from the actions of the sea in conveying Tristan to Isolde: Tristan’s watery passage instigates the death/life dynamic of the lovers’ love, which we may think of as both a contagion and a cure, and on another level it initiates the reader into the elite community of “noble hearts,” and provides her or him the benefit of “nurturing,” promised in

¹¹ See Nigel Harris, “God, Religion and Ambiguity in *Tristan*,” *A Companion to Gottfried von Strassburg’s “Tristan”* (see note 8), 127–28.

the prologue. In Gottfried's *Tristan*, therefore, water can function as a means of transportation to a place of danger, sickness or death, or to a location where one can find nurture, healing, and life.

By the time Tristan returns to Cornwall from Ireland, he has recovered very well in body, and the enthusiasm he expresses for the Irish Princess Isolde also indicates that she has made a deep impression on the young man. Hearing Tristan's high praise for the beauty and courtly qualities of the princess, and at the strongest urgings of his advisors (who despise Tristan as an upstart and ardently desire a "proper" heir for Mark), the king sends Tristan in a ship back across the sea on a wooing expedition to Ireland, hopefully to bring the younger Isolde back to marry him. Again adopting a disguise (this time as a merchant),¹² Tristan has his ship anchor a short distance from land. He launches a small skiff and attempts to come ashore at Wexford, where he believes the Irish royal family to be located. However, local townspeople threateningly block him while he is still in his skiff and he must negotiate with them to be able to continue on his mission.

The scene reverses the previous one with Môrolt; now it is the Irish who attempt to protect their land against intrusion by the Cornish, represented by Tristan, and they make their stand at the harbor, the border separating the land from the sea. Once again, Tristan's well-being is placed in jeopardy while he is on the water, and he must resort to trickery in order to survive. It is clear that the local residents consider him a potential threat, and aggressively direct their boats toward him confrontationally in a demonstration of their power:

Des küneges marschalc von Írlant,
in des gewalt und in des hant
ez allez stuont, stat unde habe,
der kam gerüret dort her abe
gewâfent unde wîcgar
mit einer michelen schar
beidiu der burgaere unde ir boten ...
die selben wîzenaere,
die leiden mortaeten,
die manegen mort haeten
begangen mit unschulden
ir hêren ze hulden,
die kâmen in die habe gezogen
mit armbrusten und mit bogen

¹² See Hannes Kästner, *Harfe und Schwert: Der höfische Spielmann bei Gottfried von Strassburg*. Untersuchungen zur deutschen Literaturgeschichte, 30 (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1981), 36–38.

und mit anderre wer
 als von rehte ein rouphер ...
 [Tristan] kérte hin gegen der habe
 und bôt in sînen gruoz hin abe
 mit gebaerden und mit munde,
 sô er suoreste kunde.
 swaz aber des gruozen waere,
 genuoge burgaere
 zen schiffelinen liefen,
 von stade genuoge riefen:
 “habe an lant, habe an lant!” (8729–35, 8744–52, 8763–71)

[The Royal Marshal of Ireland, who had power and authority over the whole town and harbor, came spurring down toward them, armed and ready for battle with a great troop, both of citizens and their emissaries ... These torturers, these cursed murderers, who had done many an innocent man to death to please their master, came marching down to the harbor with bows and arrows and other arms, like a regular band of brigands ... [Tristan] made for the harbor and saluted and bowed across to the citizens with all the charm he could muster. But, ignoring his greeting, a crowd of them ran up to [their] skiff[s], while many others shouted from the foreshore “Put to land! Put to land!” (156)]¹³

The listener/reader recalls as well that a number of jealous Cornish barons, whose enmity toward Mark’s nephew has grown substantially and who, given the opportunity, may indeed attempt to do him bodily harm, are still aboard the main ship, concealing their presence from the Irish but certainly capable of doing Tristan serious harm if they choose, particularly if he should return from his mission unsuccessfully. Tristan thus finds himself caught between two dangerous and potentially fatal adversaries as he floats in a skiff on the surface of the water. However, he has concocted a cunning ruse, taking full advantage of his merchant disguise. He announces to the Irish that he hails from Normandy and has spent several days enduring a storm (one recalls a similar situation in Tristan’s adventure with the Norwegian merchant kidnappers), which separated his ship from those of his companions.

Initially, the Irish seem unimpressed with his tale; however, their attitude soon changes, when Tristan suggests that, since he is a wealthy merchant, he will

¹³ Hatto translates lines 8768–69, “genuoge burgaere / zen schiffelinen liefen,” as “a crowd of them ran up to his [i.e., Tristan’s] skiff,” implying that Tristan had already landed on shore. However, “schiffelinen” evinces a plural form, and so most likely refers to the boats of the “burgaere”; furthermore, the logic of the passage locates Tristan still on the water, approaching the harbor (after all, the crowd is calling for Tristan to put into shore at the very end of the passage, and therefore he cannot yet be ashore). Thus, the lines in question indicate that the members of the crowd are rushing to their own boats in order to intercept Tristan’s skiff *before* it gets to shore.

richly reward them if the Royal Marshal guarantees his safety. When he presents the Marshal with the present of a finely made goblet, his protection is assured. Once again, by cleverly exercising his innate talents and dispositions, Tristan creates an association between water, danger, dissemblance, and recovery; in fact, Tristan often experiences danger when he finds himself near, on, or in water, but spontaneously thinks of a ruse, and thereby manages to survive. He is almost miraculously able to escape harm – indeed, there does seem to exist an “uncanny alliance between water and Tristan.”¹⁴

The wooing expedition is successful, and at its conclusion Tristan must bring Isolde across the sea to Tintagel, where King Mark awaits his bride-to-be. The voyage sets the stage for one of the best-known scenes in medieval literature, and the role of the sea is most significant in this context.¹⁵ Queen Isolde, the mother of Isolde the Fair, realizes that her daughter will have to learn to love the older man she will soon marry. Of course, young Isolde and Mark have never set eyes upon each other, and so their immediate feeling for one another will doubtlessly be strained at best. Furthermore, Mark is the historical foe of her people, and it was on the account of his kingdom that her uncle, Môrolt, was slain. What chance of pleasure would there be for either Mark or Isolde on their wedding night? As a gift to her daughter, Queen Isolde provides an aphrodisiac potion, with the power to inspire true love, with the intention that the new bride and her bridegroom will imbibe it in their nuptial chamber.¹⁶ She places it in the care of the younger Isolde’s lady-in-waiting, Brangaene, who conceals it aboard the ship.¹⁷

¹⁴ Albrecht Classen, “Storms, Sea Crossings, the Challenges of Nature, and the Transformation of the Protagonist in Medieval and Renaissance Literature” (see note 3), 170.

¹⁵ For Molly Robinson Kelly, this scene is the “crucial ‘pivot’ between the two halves of the romance,” and “their spatial location on the sea between Ireland and Cornwall reflects perfectly Iseut’s suspended position between the belonging she has left behind and the one that lies ahead;” *The Hero’s Place: Medieval Literary Traditions of Space and Belonging* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2009), 224–26.

¹⁶ See Otfried Ehrismann, “Isolde, der Zauber, die Liebe – der Minnetrank in Gottfrieds ‘Tristan’ zwischen Symbolik und Magie,” *Ergebnisse und Aufgaben der Germanistik am Ende des 20. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Elisabeth Feldbusch. Festschrift für Ludwig Erich Schmitt zum 80. Geburtstag (Hildesheim: Olms, 1989), 282–301, who discusses the unique function the elder Isolde performs in catalyzing the relationship between her daughter and Tristan.

¹⁷ Ann Marie Rasmussen (“The Female Figures in Gottfried’s *Tristan and Isolde*,” *A Companion to Gottfried von Strassburg’s “Tristan”* [see note 8], 137–57) claims that this is the reason Brangaene is implicated in responsibility for the love affair, and states: “Brangaene’s subsequent remorse and shame, as well as, presumably, her knowledge that the potion’s secret magic is strong, immediate, and irreversible, bind her inextricably to the fates of Isolde and Tristan” (147).

The medicinal/magical nature of the love potion liquid will come under discussion later in this essay; however, the aqueous environment in this scene contributes decisively on both the plot level, since the sea voyage is the actual geographical setting of what transpires, and on the symbolic level, since water becomes a contributing agent to the love theme. On the long voyage Isolde and her retinue become seasick due to the pitching and bobbing of the waves. Tristan puts into shore to let them recover somewhat. During the brief stop, one of the young ladies-in-waiting discovers the flask that Brangaene attempted to hide. Tristan and Isolde drink from the bottle, and grow sick at heart, since they have fallen desperately in love with one another, but each is unaware of what the other is feeling. They finally re-board the boat and turn their sails once again toward Tintagel, but their manner toward one another has changed.¹⁸ Their intimacy has clearly grown, and they begin to share the misery that they both are feeling due to their unacknowledged, budding love. When Isolde makes bold to assert that she knows what pains her so, Tristan asks her “waz wirret iu? waz wizzet ir?” (11965; “why are you so distressed, what is it that you know? [199]”). Her answer poses a puzzle, which, through its solution, cements the bond between the two lovers:¹⁹

Der Minnen vederspil Ȧsôt,
“lameir” sprach sî “daz ist mîn nôt,
lameir daz swærer mir den muot,
lameir ist, daz mir leide tuot.” (11985–88)

[“*Lameir* is what distresses me,” answered Love’s falcon, Isolde, “it is *lameir* that so oppresses me, *lameir* it is that pains me so.” (199)]

Her threefold repetition of “lameir” causes Tristan to stop for a moment and contemplate what Isolde could possibly mean. Because she repeats the word three

¹⁸ See Albrecht Classen, “Storms, Sea Crossings, the Challenges of Nature, and the Transformation of the Protagonist in Medieval and Renaissance Literature” (see note 3), 169; Classen observes that the lovers drink the potion on dry land, but the effects of the drink – far more important than the mere act of drinking it – are manifested “only when they are out on the open sea again.”

¹⁹ See Gerârd J. Brault, “L’amer, l’amer, la mer: la scène des aveux dans le *Tristan de Thomas à la lumière du fragment de Carlisle*,” *Miscellanea Mediaevalia*, I–II, ed. J. Claude Faucon, Alain Labbé and Danielle Quéruel. Nouvelle Bibliothèque du Moyen Age, 46 (Paris: Champion, 1998), 215–26; Albrecht Classen, *Verzweiflung und Hoffnung* (see note 2), 288–91; and Christopher R. Clason, “The Bitterness of Love on the Sea: Isolde’s Amorous Discourse Viewed through Gottfried’s Crystalline Transparency,” *Words of Love and Love of Words in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, ed. Albrecht Classen. Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 347 (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2008), 275–89.

times, he conceives the idea that there may be three meanings represented by a homonym, and so he wishes to identify what may be afflicting her by examining the possible sense of each. In the process, he discovers a way of communicating with Isolde, one which he will share with her for the rest of their days, and which depends on the lovers' understanding of language on a higher level than that of merely reporting the reality one perceives. The lovers employ language on a symbolic level, where metaphor, word play, and nuance become important factors.²⁰ Thus, when Tristan begins to assess Isolde's statement, he reasons as follows:

sus begunde er sich versinnen,
l'ameir daz waere minnen,
l'ameir bitter, la meir mer.
der meine der dûhte in ein her. (11993–96)

[He then recalled that *l'ameir* meant “Love,” *l'ameir* “bitter,” *la meir* the sea: it seemed to have a host of meanings. (199)]

In order to ascertain more precisely the source of Isolde's difficulties, Tristan asks about the final two possibilities:

“ich waene” sprach er “schoene Îsôt,
mer unde sûr sint iuwer nôt.
iu smecket mer unde wint.
ich waene, iu diu zwei bitter sint?” (12003–06)

[“Surely, fair Isolde, the sharp smack of sea is the cause of your distress? The tang of the sea is too strong for you? It is this you find so bitter? (199)]

The association of the three elements (love, sea, and bitterness) in this way provides a kind of mystical union, achieved through language, which defines the very foundation of their relationship in love.²¹ The particular place the sea holds

20 The manner in which knowledge and its communication differ for the lovers from that of their peers has been the subject of important studies of Gottfried's work; see, for example, Rüdiger Schnell, *Suche nach Wahrheit: Gottfrieds “Tristan und Isold” als erkenntnikritischer Roman*. Hermaea: Germanistische Forschungen, Neue Folge 67 (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1992); and Eckart Conrad Lutz, “lesen – unmüezec wesen: Überlegungen zu lese- und erkenntnistheoretischen Implikationen von Gottfrieds Schreiben,” *Der “Tristan” Gottfrieds von Straßburg: Symposium Santiago de Compostela, 5. bis 8. April 2000*, ed. Christoph Huber and Victor Millet (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 2002), 295–313.

21 The concept of a *unio mystica* in Gottfried's *Tristan* has long been a focus of critical discussion; see for example Julius Schwietering, *Der Tristan Gottfrieds von Strassburg und die Bernhardische Mystik*. Abhandlungen der Preußischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Jahrgang 1943,

in this arrangement, however, underscores the importance of liquid water as an element of both space (that is, an environment in which the action occurs) and passageway (on which ships travel, for example, to Ireland, to Cornwall, etc.) in the work. The lovers drink the love potion during a pause in their voyage, which they have taken in the first place due to the fact that the sea is rough, they are sailing swiftly, and the Irish are not accustomed to the rolling of the waves and are feeling somewhat seasick.

On the surface level, the sea is “bitter,” and results in the plot event where the lovers imbibe the potion. When the lovers return to the ship and continue their voyage, the influences of sea and bitterness return, but as Isolde hints, in her riddle and in her responses to Tristan’s questions, love is also in the mix. Without the bitterness that is part of being on the sea, of being present in the moment and feeling the pitch of the boat and the “smack” and “tang” of the wind, the experience of being on the water is not an authentic one, just as love, without the sting of its pain and longing, is not an authentic experience of love.

Furthermore, there are certain feelings and sensations one has while one is aboard a boat on the sea that metaphorically mimic the experience of true love, and which are implicit here in the lovers’ conversation. When in a boat on the open water one often feels out of control, since the surface on which one stands pitches and tilts surprisingly and unpredictably; in the experience of intense emotions around love, one often senses a similar loss of control, balance, and composure. Love sometimes appears to possess a mysterious, fathomless depth, much as the deep waters of the ocean, and when one attempts to peer into love’s abyss, to understand the reasons of the heart for the emotional extremes true lovers must endure, it proves as impenetrable as the “deep blue sea.”

Finally, when one is sailing on the open sea one often becomes aware of its vast uniformity, and yet, as in the situation of being in love, one cannot possibly know with certainty what lies just beyond the horizon on the course one has set. Isolde’s anguished responses to Tristan’s questions reveal a heart that is experiencing all of these sensations, and through her skillful manipulation of language she conveys this fact to Tristan, while she enables him to make a similar avowal of his profound and ineluctable feeling for her: “entriuwen, schoene, als ist auch

Philosophisch-historische Klasse, 5 (Berlin: Verlag der Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1943); Albrecht Schöne, “Zu Gottfrieds ‘Tristan’-Prolog,” *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte* 29 (1955): 447–61; Klaus Speckenbach, *Studien zum Begriff ‘Edelez Herze’ im Tristan Gottfrieds von Strassburg* (Munich: Eidos, 1965), 98–120; and Albrecht Classen, “Religious Utopia in Gottfried von Strassburg’s Tristan: Was Gottfried Influenced by Mystics such as Hildegard von Bingen?,” *Amsterdamse Beiträge zur Älteren Germanistik* 68 (2011): 143–67.

mir, / lameir und ir, ir sît mîn nôt" (12014–15; "Faith, lovely woman ... so it is with me, *lameir* and you are what distress me" [200]). While "lameir" happens to provide a convenient, multi-layered homonym that precisely fits the situation, it also initiates a means by which the lovers will communicate with one another over the remainder of the tale, where each will peel back layers of meaning from utterances before arriving at the correct nuance meant by the other.²² It will be confidential, since only the two of them will know that they must make the effort to dig deeper into what each is saying. It will also enable them to carry on their love affair for a long time.

But it is also clear that the experience has made them sick with love as well, even though their intimacy is also a remedy for their pain, and their physical contact "was der minnen buoze / ein saeleclîcher anevanc" (12040–41; "... was a blissful beginning for Love's remedy" [200]). When Brangaene observes them during the voyage, she notices the distinct change in their appearance and demeanor:

vil schiere wart, daz sî began
den ernest an in beiden sehen
und ûzen an ir lîbe spehen
den inneren smerzen
ir muotes unde ir herzen.
si muote ir beider ungemach,
wan sî si z'allen zîten sach
ameiren unde amûren,
siuften unde trûren,
trahten und pansieren,
ir varwe wandelieren.
sin genâmen nie vor trahte war
dekeiner slahte lipnar,
biz sî der mangel und daz leit
an dem lîbe als überstreit,
daz es Brangaenen angst nam
und in die vorhte dâ von kam,
ez waere ir beider ende ... (12058–75)

[It did not take her long to see that they were in earnest, or to detect in their demeanour the pain within their hearts. She was harrowed by their suffering, for she saw them the whole

²² See, for example, the scene in the garden by the brook, discussed below; see also Rüdiger Schnell, *Suche nach Wahrheit* (see note 20), 127–49, who closely considers differences between this kind of communication and that of the court as a kind of "doppelte Wirklichkeit," and the courtiers come off far worse as a result of their inabilities to understand nuanced expressions, metaphors, or analogous thinking, such as that practiced by the lovers.

time pining and languishing, sighing and sorrowing, musing and dreaming and changing colour. They were so lost in thought that they neglected all nourishment, till want and misery so reduced their bodies that Brangane was greatly alarmed and feared this hardship might prove the end of them. (200)]

While the lovers' pain on their journey over the sea is unfortunate, their physical and behavioral changes pose a genuine, grave danger. Anyone witnessing the obvious signs of love sickness would immediately know that the two were in love.²³ Of course, this would be reported promptly to King Mark as soon as the ship arrives at Tintagel (we must remember that the jealous Cornish barons are among those returning with Tristan and Isolde onboard the ship), and the discovery would surely mean the lovers' death. There is only one solution: that the lovers cease attempting to hide their symptoms of love-sickness and instead consummate their union sexually (thereby momentarily curing their longing), while the faithful Brangaene watches out for possible intruders or spies. Only on board the ship at sea can the lovers accomplish this, for it provides them the opportunity to remain isolated from the rest of the retinue despite the limited space aboard the craft. Gottfried inserts a "Treatise on Love" at this point, and it is well worth noting his use of the language of sickness and healing with which he prefaces his treatise:

Des nahtes, dō diu schoene lac,
 ir triure unde ir trahte pflac
 nāch ir trūtamise,
 nu kam geslichen lise
 zuo der kemenāten īn
 ir amīs unde ir arzātīn,
 Tristan und diu Minne.
 Minne diu arzātinne
 si vuorte ze handen
 ir siechen Tristanden.
 och vant s'Isôte ir siechen dā.
 die siechen beide nam si sâ
 und gab in ir, im sie
 ein ander z'arzātie.
 wer haete och dise beide

²³ Illness caused by love was accepted, validated, and well-attested since antiquity, and particularly interesting to medieval physicians and authors; see Mary Frances Wack, *Lovesickness in the Middle Ages: The Viaticum and its Commentaries* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990), who presents the Viaticum and its commentaries both in original Latin and in English translation, with analyses of the texts as they relate to diagnosing (and curing) lovesickness.

von dem gemeinem leide
 vereinet unde bescheiden
 wan einunge an in beiden,
 der stric ir beider sinne? (12157–75)

[That night, as the lovely woman lay brooding and pining for her darling, there came stealing into her cabin her lover and her physician – Tristan and Love. Love the physician led Tristan, her sick one, by the hand: and there, too, she found her other patient, Isolde. She quickly took both sufferers and gave him to her, her to him, to be each others' remedy. Who else could have severed them from the ill which they shared but Union, the knot that joined their senses? (201–02)]

Since the act of love-making has eased the pain and suffering of their excruciating desires, the lovers enjoy a momentary respite from stress, and enjoy their relationship without anxiety that they might be discovered. However, they have placed themselves in perhaps even greater danger, since now Isolde is no longer “virginal,” and her wedding night with King Mark impends. As the reader will later discover, the lovers and Brangaene will concoct a brilliant bed-trick to quell any possible suspicion on Mark’s part that his wife has already had sexual experiences, and so the lovers are able to survive and to continue their affair.²⁴

However, what has transpired on the sea will affect all aspects of Gottfried’s plot for the remainder of the work. Furthermore, as we have seen, the water has played an active role in the events themselves on board the ship: the roughness of the sea forced the ship to put into port to allow the seasick voyagers to recover, setting the stage for the drinking of the love potion; the sea became an essential part of the riddle by which Isolde avowed her love to Tristan, and Tristan to her; and finally, the sea provided the space in which the lovers could consummate their love, for which Gottfried employs the metaphor of malady / cure. In this way, Gottfried foregrounds the space of *Tristan und Isolde*, and the dynamic relationship between the characters and their watery environment becomes a crucial element, both of the plot and the themes of love, sickness and recovery at the heart of the work.

Unfortunately, Gottfried’s narrative is fragmentary and breaks off long before a number of important issues have been resolved. However, it is very likely that Gottfried would have followed his source, Thomas of Brittany, closely in plot

²⁴ See Wendy Doniger, *The Bedtrick: Tales of Sex and Masquerade*. Worlds of Desire: the Chicago Series on Sexuality, Gender, and Culture (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 277–78; Christopher R. Clason, “Deception in the *Boudoir*: Gottfried’s *Tristan* and ‘Lying’ in Bed,” *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 103 (2004): 277–96.

details.²⁵ If we may assume this to be the case, then Gottfried's version of the lovers' death would probably have come to pass: Tristan, wounded and on the edge of death, sends for Isolde to bring a cure for him, and requests that the boat captain fly white sails if she is on board and black sails if she has refused to come; the boat on the return voyage shows white sails; however, Tristan's jealous wife, Isolde of the White Hands, lies to him that they are black, and he dies; when Isolde finally reaches him and discovers his lifeless body, she, too, expires from love and grief.

As we have witnessed in previous scenes on the water, the health and well-being of the lovers becomes an issue, and a correct interpretation of what one sees, hears or otherwise senses (here, the color of the sails powering the ship over the water) has a direct and profound effect on their very survival. Again, when Tristan or Isolde travel on the sea, the aquatic environment dynamically and actively forges thematic connections with love, dissemblance, sickness, health, danger and rescue. In the final scene of the tale, the interpretation of a sign which Tristan makes is the incorrect one, and the rescue does not ensue.

Water as Dynamic Environment: Submerging

Not only does water provide a path between the major venues of action on which the lovers travel, but on at least two occasions it also becomes an environment into which Tristan submerges when he is in the gravest of dangers. Both instances occur while Tristan is performing his duties on the wooing expedition, intending to fetch Isolde as wife for his lord Mark. It is important to note that both situations are concerned with Isolde *seeing* Tristan in a vulnerable position when she commands a place of power over him. Furthermore, they are connected to his killing

²⁵ The discovery of the “Carlisle Fragment” of Thomas of Brittany’s text provides strong evidence for this conclusion: see Michael Benskin, Tony Hunt, and Ian Short, “Un nouveau fragment du *Tristan de Thomas*,” *Romania* 113 (1992–1995): 289–319; Walter Haug, “Reinterpreting the *Tristan* Romances of Thomas and Gottfried: Implications of a Recent Discovery,” *Arthuriana* 7 (1997): 44–59; Ulrike Jantzen and Niels Kröner, “Zum neugefundenen *Tristan*-Fragment des Thomas d’Angleterre: Editionskritik und Vergleich mit Gottfrieds Bearbeitung,” *Euphorion* 91 (1997): 291–309; and Sidney M. Johnson, “This Drink Will Be the Death of You: Interpreting the Love Potion in Gottfried’s *Tristan*,” *A Companion to Gottfried von Strassburg’s “Tristan”* (see note 8), 87–112; here 91, describing how Thomas’s Fragment connects with Gottfried’s text in the avowal scene.

of a dragon (in mythology, often a guardian of virgins and treasures).²⁶ Finally, they occur before the lovers have drunk the potion: Isolde's decisions to act in order to preserve Tristan's life, then, may contribute to an argument in favor of her attraction to, and affection for, Tristan well before they have felt the narcotic influences of the aphrodisiac.

The first incident occurs immediately after Tristan battles the dragon that has been ravaging the Irish countryside. Mark has offered the hand of his daughter in marriage to whoever (of appropriate rank) can rid his people of this scourge. Tristan discovers the beast's whereabouts, and after a ferocious battle he manages to kill it. To prove that he is the dragon-slayer, he cuts out the dragon's tongue and slips it inside his breastplate; however, the beast's poisonous tongue causes Tristan to grow faint, and as he begins to lose consciousness he seeks a place to lie down:

nu gesach er eine lachen swaben
 smal unde māzlīche grōz,
 in die von einem velse vlōz
 ein kūelez cleinez brunnelīn.
 dā viel er also gewāfent īn
 und sancte sich unz an den grunt.
 er lie hie vor niwan den munt.
 dā lag er den tac und die naht.
 wan ime benam al sīne maht
 diu leide zunge, die er truoc.
 der rouch, der von der an in sluoc,
 der eine entworhte in garwe
 an crefte und an der varwe,
 daz er von dannen niht enkam,
 unz in diu kūnigīn dā nam. (9078–92)

[But he espied the shimmer of a fair-sized pool into which a cool rill tumbled from a rock. Into this he dropped, all in armour as he was, and let himself sink to the bottom, leaving only his mouth above water. He lay there that day and night, for the cursed tongue which he had on him robbed him of his senses. The fumes alone that assailed him from it ravaged his strength and colour, so that he did not leave that place until the Princess delivered him. (161)]

A cowardly competitor for the princess's hand, the court Steward, then finds the dragon's carcass and opportunistically cuts off its head in order to "prove" that he killed the beast. The imposter immediately searches for the true dragon-slayer,

²⁶ See Joseph Campbell, *The Masks of God: Creative Mythology* (1968; New York, London, et al.: Penguin, 1976), 119–20.

in the hopes of finding him in a weakened condition and thereby to have an easy time of murdering and burying his rival. However, beneath the natural waters of the pool, Tristan remains safely hidden from this villainous adversary. Obviously, it becomes most important that Isolde discover the whereabouts of the true dragon-slayer as quickly as she possibly can, or otherwise she will have to wed the fraudulent “hero.” With the aid of her mother and other women of the court, she rides out into the countryside, finds Tristan (whom the women soon recognize as “Tanris”) and together they remove him from the pool. Thus, for a second time, Tristan appears to his future beloved as a foundling in an incapacitated condition upon or under the water, and requires healing remedies to save his life. Discovering the actual history of the battle with the dragon via his account, the women transport the weakened warrior back to the court to permit him to recover.

Soon thereafter Tristan again immerses himself in water, becoming vulnerable once more, this time while taking a bath.²⁷ Isolde has grown more and more fascinated with Tristan’s beautiful physical attributes, and while he bathes she begins to inspect his armor and especially his sword, discovering a place where a piece is missing from the blade. She also notices that a shard, which she earlier recovered from her slain uncle Môrolt’s skull, precisely fits the contours of the missing section in Tristan’s blade; furthermore, reasoning through the thinly-veiled deception of the syllable reversal in the name “Tanris,” she comes rapidly to the conclusion that Tanris is, in fact, Tristan, a reviled enemy of her father and people and killer of her beloved uncle. Wielding the sword, she races up to Tristan’s bath tub and threatens his life. However, she does not take it, since Tristan, her mother, and her lady-in-waiting convince her otherwise. Of course, Tristan’s rhetorical skills play a decisive role here, and in any case it would be shameful for her to kill an unarmed man in the bath, had she taken the time to ponder her actions. But even before she can do so, the sudden, stark reality of what her eyes discover before her causes her to hesitate: in the bath Tristan is naked, and one cannot ignore the fact that Isolde is visually confronting a handsome, vigorous, and well-built man, and that she has him in a most vulnerable position – and therefore may indeed feel an attraction for him,²⁸ somewhat

²⁷ See Albrecht Classen’s contribution to this volume, “The ‘Dirty Middle Ages’: Bathing and Cleanliness in the Middle Ages. With an Emphasis on Medieval German Courtly Romances and Early Modern Novels: Another Myth-Buster.” Cf. also Rosa A. Perez’s article here in this volume, “Troubled Waters: Bathing and Illicit Relations in *Equitan* and *Flamenca*.”

²⁸ Elsewhere in *Tristan*, Gottfried intensifies the male gaze as an instrument of scopophilia, especially in the scene of Mark’s discovery of the lovers lying on the crystalline bed in the *minnegrotte*; see A. C. Spearing, *The Medieval Poet as Voyeur: Looking and Listening in Medieval Love-Narratives* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 64; in regard to

akin, for example, to the mythical longing of Salmacis for her visual object of desire, Hermaphroditus.²⁹ Again, in the water Tristan experiences danger, but gains deliverance because the Princess Isolde shows him mercy. It is also significant that while Tristan is submerged in water for the second time, his identity as “slayer” of a monstrous enemy emerges: metaphorically, Môrolt functioned as the scourge of King Mark, periodically ravaging the Cornish court, similarly to the manner in which the dragon had been devastating the Irish countryside. While Tristan lies *sub aquis*, the truth is revealed regarding his identity as killer of Môrolt and as dragon slayer. In Isolde's discovery of the latter, she is joyous; in the revelation of the former, she is grief-stricken.

In Isolde's responses here, the reader becomes aware of certain key psychological actualities that link Tristan to water, vulnerability, sickness, health and Isolde. In the scene of Tristan in the pool, he lies unconscious and endangered in a natural space outside the court, and Isolde comes to his rescue joyfully. Her mother, a skilled practitioner of the healing arts, can perform her magical skills and aid in the full restoration of the worthy knight's strength and vigor. In the scene of Tristan in the bath, his nakedness and vulnerability are obvious to Isolde in the cultural space of the court, and the truth Isolde discovers makes her initially wish to kill him, but later she spares his life. Again, her mother intercedes, at first by urging a moment of reflection before drastic action, and later through her logic and rhetorical skills (complementing those of Tristan), enabling Tristan to remain alive and healthy. Finally, these two aspects of the younger Isolde's response to Tristan, one joyful and the other sorrowful, reflect the thematic intertwining of joy and sorrow that runs throughout this work and especially characterizes the nature of the relationship between the two lovers.

female scopophilia and male objects of desire in literature, see Ritchie Robertson, “Wieland's Nude Bathers: Visual Pleasure and the Female Gaze,” *German Life and Letters* 64 (2011): 31–42; and Sandra Lindemann Summers, *Ogling Ladies: Scopophilia in Medieval German Literature* (Gainesville, Tallahassee, et al.: University of Florida Press, 2013).

29 Regarding this mythical relationship and its connection with the Tristan texts, see Françoise Clier-Colombani, “La Nymphe Salmacis: un Prototype Ovidien de Mélusine,” *Mélusines Continentales et Insulaires: Actes du colloque international tenu les 27 et 28 mars 1997 à l'Université Paris XII et au Collège des Irlandais*, ed. Jeanne-Marie Boicin and Proinsias Mac Cana. Nouvelle bibliothèque du Moyen Âge, 8 (Paris: Honoré Champion Éditeur, 1999), 43–64.

Water and other Liquids as Media of Communication

As we have seen, in Gottfried's *Tristan* water provides a spatial medium, both as a path by which the lovers travel as well as an environment into which Tristan submerges for safety and recovery's sake. Additionally, water and other liquids function as a different kind of medium, one of communication, especially of non-verbal signs that must be interpreted in some way. The processes of representation, transmission of meaning and its correct interpretation are particularly significant for the continuance of the lovers' affair. Liquids connect the processes directly and concretely with the characters' health, happiness, and welfare.

Gottfried reveals two aspects of the communicative potential of water in a scene wherein Brangaene has arranged a clandestine nocturnal meeting between the lovers in a garden near the castle, beneath a large tree and next to a brook. Brangaene suggests that the first communication is to be accomplished by Tristan: it is arranged that he will release twigs in the stream and thereby signal to Isolde that he is waiting for her to join him. At the appointed time Tristan initiates the communication by performing his appointed task, and when Isolde sees the twigs she responds as planned, completing the communicative exchange between the lovers.

The strategy succeeds for eight meetings. However, one night their plans are thwarted by a second communication that is effected just after Tristan drops the twigs into the brook. It is not willed, but it is nevertheless clear and follows the pattern of representation, communication and interpretation. Tristan crosses the brook and immediately notices two shadows cast upon the grass, one large and the other small. Correctly, he determines that they are the shadows of his lord, King Mark, and Melôt, a dwarf at Mark's court and ally of the jealous barons, who has been plotting against the lovers and concocting schemes to expose their affair and to catch them *in flagrante delecto*:

sus kam, daz er den schate gesach
von Marke und von Melôte,
wan der mâne ie genôte
durch den boum hin nider schein.
nu er des schates von in zwein
bescheidenlîche wart gewar,
nu haete er michel angst dar,
wan er erkande sich iesâ
der vâre unde der lâge dâ. (14628–36)

[And so it chanced that he noticed Mark's and Melot's shadows, for the moon was shining down through the tree very brightly. When he had made out these two forms distinctly, he was seized with great anxiety, for he realized in a flash that he was in a trap. (234)]

Fortunately for the lovers, when Isolde approaches the meeting spot she, too, perceives the shadows on the grass, and the lovers are able to devise a string of conversation that affirms their love for one another while allaying the king's suspicions and avoiding detection.

This scene is particularly interesting because it demonstrates how the lovers communicate via signs. The lovers are able to employ water as a communication device because they have an understanding of signs, metaphors, and symbols, which members of the court clearly do not comprehend. In the semiotics of the communication, the twigs represent Tristan, who sends them downstream as a kind of metaphor for the manner in which he first traveled over water to Ireland, to find Isolde. His beloved comes to meet him in the garden metaphorically as Isolde has come to Cornwall. They read the signs (the twigs) correctly; they are prepared to understand metaphors, and thereby can close the communicative circle. King Mark and Melot cannot understand this means of communication, and like most others at court can only fathom the obvious.³⁰ Thus, they permit their shadows, metaphorically casting the darkness of their non-understanding onto the scene below, to betray their presence to those below who can read signs and understand their full meanings. Passing through the water (crossing the brook), Tristan immediately becomes aware of the shadows, and as Isolde nears the brook she, too, perceives immediately what is transpiring. Again, water becomes a crucial element of their skill at conveying and reading signs correctly and their ability to communicate meaning exclusively to one another.³¹

The two modes of interpretation (the surface-only understanding typical of the courtiers and the symbolic-metaphorical comprehension which the lovers regularly practice) clash once more as the result of the dwarf Melot's machinations, as he attempts to acquire further proof of the lovers' affair to present to Mark. He devises a scheme whereby he hopes to use the lovers' blood as a sign of their adultery. Blood has long been recognized as one of the most significant liquids in medieval narratives, and has been the focus of much critical atten-

³⁰ Rüdiger Schnell, *Suche nach Wahrheit* (see note 20), 175–79.

³¹ Albrecht Classen explores various aspects of the “kommunikative Gemeinschaft” of Tristan and Isolde in his *Verzweiflung und Hoffnung* (see note 2), 279–358.

tion.³² Clearly, it obtains numerous symbolic meanings; in *Tristan* it is noteworthy how, in a rapid sequence of scenes, blood achieves a remarkable turn-about in significance that connects health, love, danger and dissemblance, not only as an essential, physiological substance but also on the metaphorical level, where the secondary layers of meaning of blood become starkly manifest.

In accordance with medical practices of the medieval period,³³ the king, his wife and his nephew undergo a bloodletting for purposes of health and friendship:

In einem tage er z'âder liez,
 als in sîn valscher rât gehiez,
 und mit im lôt und Tristan.
 diene wânden niht, daz in hier an
 dekeiner slahte swaere
 vür gebreitet waere,
 und nâmen keiner vâre war.
 sus lac diu heinlîche schar
 nâch gemelîcher sache
 den tac in ir gemache
 âne schal und âne braht. (15117–27)

[One day, on the advice of his false counsellors, Mark had himself bled, and Tristan and Isolde, too. They had no suspicion that any sort of trouble was being prepared for them and were entirely off their guard. Thus, the King's intimate circle lay pleasurable at ease in their rooms. (241)]

The bloodletting initially results in the lovers' sensation of well-being, and thus serves its intended, medieval medicinal function. In the evening, the group retires, but not before the dwarf has surreptitiously spread white flour on the

³² Among the numerous discussions of medieval blood symbolism, the following studies especially deserve mention: Karl A. Zaenker, "The Cult of the Holy Blood in Late Medieval Germany," *Mosaic* 10 (1977): 37–46; Peggy McCracken, *The Curse of Eve, the Wound of the Hero: Blood, Gender, and Medieval Literature*. The Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003); Matthias Meyer, "Filling a Bath, Dropping into the Snow, Drunk through a Glass Straw: Transformations and Transfigurations of Blood in German Arthurian Romances," *Bibliographical Bulletin of the International Arthurian Society/Bulletin Bibliographique de la Société Internationale Arthurienne* 58 (2006): 399–424; Bettina Bildhauer, *Medieval Blood* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2006); and Caroline Walker Bynum, *Wonderful Blood: Theology and Practice in Late Medieval Northern Germany and Beyond* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007).

³³ Regarding the rationale for, and the benefits of, the medieval medical practice of bloodletting, see Bettina Bildhauer, *Medieval Blood* (see note 32), 23–25.

floor, in order to detect the footprints or other concrete signs of anyone who might step between the beds in the bedchamber. The intention of this setup is to collect mere evidence, to acquire proof on a level of facticity, and not to understand signs on the deeper, symbolic level where the lovers communicate with one another: thus, it is meant to discover adultery, not love. When the bells announcing matinal prayers sound, the king and Melôt rise and go to pray, counting on the flour to bear witness to any movement while they are gone. Warned of the trap by ever-watchful Brangaene, but still unable to control his ardor for Isolde, Tristan leaps from his bed to that of the queen. Unfortunately, the shock of the long leap opens his wound and he bleeds profusely on and inside her covers.

er spranc hin an daz bette
 und verlôs ouch an dem wette,
 wan ime sîn âder úf brach,
 daz ime sît michel ungemach
 und leit begunde machen.
 bette unde bettelachen
 diu missevarte daz bluot,
 also bluot von rehete tuot.
 ez verwete wâ unde wâ. (15189–97)

[... he leapt on to the bed, yet lost his gamble, for his vein opened and this caused him much suffering and trouble in the outcome. His blood stained the bed and its linen, as is the way with blood, dyeing it here, there, and everywhere. (241–42)]

In many cultures there is something inherently authentic and irrefutable about blood, and it serves as a natural, visual sign to indicate an “indisputable truth.”³⁴ And as is the way with blood, so, too, it is with love, the traces of which are there to read if one knows how to do so. Tristan’s bloodstains on Isolde’s bed sheets signal something even more profound: Tristan, Isolde’s true lover, risks everything because his desire for her is so great. The blood that marks her bed emphasizes this, while it also recalls that Tristan was Isolde’s first sexual partner. The metonymy of blood for coital experience is particularly effective here: in this case, it is *Tristan*’s blood soiling the beds, imitating (but also reversing the gender of) the ritualized proof of virginity, rendered by the blood of the ruptured hymen

³⁴ Bettina Bildhauer, “Medieval European Conceptions of Blood: Truth and Human Integrity,” *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute (N.S.)* 19, Special Issue S1 (2013), S62, online at: <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/1467-9655.12016/full> (last access on May 17, 2015); although Bildhauer is referring in this instance to an occurrence of blood in Wolfram’s *Parzival*, the sense that truth itself resides in blood, and that humans rely on this “fact” for interpreting their experiences, courses throughout Gottfried’s work as well.

staining nuptial sheets.³⁵ But it is not the blood of the woman, but rather that of the man, giving us as listeners/readers a visual image signifying their love. In this way, Tristan's blood validates the inherent reciprocity in their partnership and provides another deeply meaningful, natural symbol of their equality with respect to one another in their relationship. Thereafter, Tristan returns to his own bed, soiling the sheets there as well with his blood, as if to underscore further the solemn and reciprocal connection he maintains with his beloved Isolde.

When Mark returns to the bedchamber, he investigates, and discovers not a single drop of blood on the floor (which from his point-of-view would have been interpreted as an obvious sign of a sexual love-liaison).³⁶ However, when he throws back Isolde's covers, and then asks Tristan to rise, he uncovers a profusion of blood within the beds of both. Isolde claims that the blood results from her own wound: “mîn âder brast, dâ gieng ez van. / diu ist kûme iezuo verstanden.” (15216–17) (“My vein opened, and it bled from it. It has only just stopped bleeding!” [242]) However, Mark is suddenly placed in a logical quandary, and ponders why both beds might be soiled with blood, yet there are no drops on the floor. As obvious as the condemning signs of adultery are to everyone else, the king remains doubtful; the point is driven home most clearly by Gottfried in the description of the King's contemplations of the things he has just witnessed:

und wan er aber die künigin
und sîn bette bluotic vant,
dâ von bestuont in al zehant
sîn ungedanc und sîn unmuot,
alse den zwîvelhaften tuot.
mit disem zwîvel enwiste er war.
er wânde her, er wânde dar,
ern wiste, waz er wolte

³⁵ Peggy McCracken (*The Curse of Eve, the Wound of the Hero* [see note 32], 12) notices a similar phenomenon in Chrétien de Troyes's *Chevalier de la charrete*: in a scene where Lancelot, whose finger is bleeding, has slept with Guenevere. As his blood stains her bed, Mélégant accuses her of adultery, as McCracken comments, “this reading of the blood reverses the association of bed sheets and women's blood found in the widespread custom of displaying blood-stained linens after a wedding night as proof of a woman's virginity and sexual initiation”; see also Kathleen Coyne Kelly, *Performing Virginity and Testing Chastity in the Middle Ages*. Routledge Research in Medieval Studies, 2 (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), 63–90.

³⁶ McCracken, *The Curse of Eve, the Wound of the Hero* (see note 32), 11 points out that in Béroul's *Roman de Tristan* blood drops do indeed stain the flour on the floor, and thus “the blood on the sheets and the blood drops on the flour that covers the floor between Iseut's and Tristan's beds are clearly identified as Tristan's”; for that reason, there can be no doubt in Mark's mind, and the adultery is proven.

oder wes er waenen solte.
 er haete zuo den stunden
 an s̄inem bette vunden
 diu schuldegen minnen spor
 und vant dekeinez dervor. (15244–56)

[But again, finding the Queen and his bed all bloody, he was at once assailed by dark thoughts and ill humour, as always happens to wavers. Amid these doubts he did not know what to do. He believed one thing, he believed another. He did not know what he wanted or what he should believe. He had just found Love's guilty traces in his bed, though not before it, and was thus told the truth and denied it. (242)]

The stark proof offered by the blood in both beds could not be more explicit. However, Mark is not able to examine the signs from a more dynamically effective perspective. Mark's indecision and doubt, when he is confronted with such profound, multi-layered evidence, results from his inclination to interpret what he sees on the surface level only, even when intuition points him in another direction. For him, there are no red drops or footprints on the floor, and so the signs technically do not point to adultery. But the blood present in both beds seems compellingly damning. The quandary of logical contradictions into which he has fallen accounts for much of the anguish he experiences. Gone are the pleasant and sociable feelings the three enjoyed after the bloodletting, having been replaced by Mark's misgivings and the lovers' fears of condemnation. Thus, in the course of less than one-hundred fifty lines, the image of blood in the text shifts in its semiotic/metaphorical field of meaning from a substance that sustains and provides pleasurable sensations to a substance that causes doubt and emotional pain, from an instrument for achieving health and well-being to its opposite.

The function of water as a communicative or metaphorical medium occurs as well in Gottfried's source. Thomas of Brittany concludes his tale of *Tristan* with two examples of water employed in this way, and although we cannot know with certainty, it is highly likely that very similar usages would have been carried forward in Gottfried as well, had he been able to complete his unfinished work.³⁷ After Gottfried has left off, Thomas's fragment continues the narrative where Tristan woos and marries Yseut of the White Hands. The inauthenticity of the relationship between the husband and wife becomes clear when Yseut's brother Caerdin (together with the reader) discovers that Tristan, long after the couple's wedding night, has denied his wife any coital relations, even the slightest erotic touch. The manner in which Yseut reveals Tristan's sexual reluctance to her brother employs water as an active, dynamic agent, presenting a metaphor that,

37 Regarding this likelihood, see note 25 above.

when unpacked, fills the listener/reader with genuine sympathy for the heart-broken queen's situation. The siblings are riding together one day when Isolde's palfrey splashes its front hooves in a water-filled ditch:

Al flatir qu'il fait el petus
 Del cros del pié saut eau sus;
 Contre les cuises li sailli
 Quant el ses cuisses enovri
 Por le cheval que ferir volt.
 De la frайдur s'esfroie Ysodt,
 Getë un cri, e rien ne dit,
 E [is]si de parfont cuer rit
 Que, si ere une quarentaigne,
 Oncore astenist donc a paigne.

[As the horse's hoof fell into the water-hole,
 the water splashed up from the hollow in the shoe
 as high as her thighs,
 as she opened them
 to spur on the horse.
 Yseut was startled by the cold water and
 let out a cry, but said nothing.
 Yet she laughed so uncontrollably
 that, even had it been a time for widow's mourning,
 she could scarcely have stopped herself. (1159–68)]³⁸

Caerdin asks his sister the reason for her hearty laughter, which strikes him as completely inappropriate. Her response reveals much: her awareness of the situation's humor, her resentment and despair at Tristan's behavior, and finally her capacity for understanding language and the use of metaphor in order to construct a most effective image in the listener/reader's mind:

... “Ge ris de mon pensé,
 D'une aventure quë avint,
 E por ce ris m'en sovint:
 Ceste aigue, que ci esclata,
 Sor mes cuisses plus haut monta
 Quë unques main d'ome ne fist,
 Ne que Tristran onques me quist.”

³⁸ Stewart Gregory, ed. and trans., “Thomas's *Tristan*,” *Early French Tristan Poems*, vol. 2, ed. Norris J. Lacy. Arthurian Archives (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1998), with line references in parentheses.

[... “I was laughing at a thought I had,
 about something that has happened,
 and remembering it made me laugh:
 that water which splashed up and touched me here
 came higher up my thighs
 than ever did a man’s hand
 or than where Tristram ever sought to touch me.” (1190–96)]

Water, already firmly established as part of the central love theme in Gottfried’s work, here in Thomas’s poem becomes an indication for the absence of that love. The metaphor of audacious water caressing her thighs is a clever one, and its sudden, powerful violation of Yseut gives strong evidence of a “will” of nature to reveal truth. Yseut’s spontaneous and emotional outburst provides the starker contrast with the imposed, rationalized control of courtly decorum³⁹ (which her brother obviously maintains in his indignant attitude in the following lines), but behind it one senses authentic, deep sadness and frustration. Her laughter is thus somewhat ironic, and portends the intense despair and even greater hatred she will later harbor for Tristan.

Such feelings fester within Yseut of the White Hands, and by the end of Thomas’s fragment she is fully capable of performing an evil deed. Thus, the stage is set for the final water-based symbolism of the narrative which we have already briefly examined in the previous context of water as a medium of transportation. Tristan is dying, having been wounded in battle by a poisonous spear. Yseut of the White Hands, serving as lookout in this *teichoscopia* – a unique example, since the messenger tells a lie – announces to her moribund husband that the ship approaching them bears black sails (meaning that Yseult the Fair is not on board), when in fact it bears white ones, heralding the arrival of Tristan’s true love and potential salvation. Of course, sails are the primary means for propelling a ship across the water; that their color also “signifies” meaning enables the water again to play an active role in the semiotic structure informing this part of the tale. Additionally, the particular usage of water, sails, and color in the final scene of Thomas’s *Tristan* establishes a linkage to a narrative of classical antiquity; the incident recalls the Greek mythological tale of Theseus’s grave error,

³⁹ This contrast is systematically examined in Michael Seggewiss, “*Natur* und *Kultur* im Tristan Gottfrieds von Straßburg. Beiträge zur älteren Literaturgeschichte (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2012), 71–75.

where the black sails on his ship falsely announce his death and result in his father's despair and suicide.⁴⁰

Liquid as Poison / Potion / Cure

On numerous occasions in Gottfried's *Tristan*, various substances serve functions that affect human health, frame of mind, and sickness. In many cases the text does not make clear whether the poisons or medicines are liquids or solids, and one can only speculate regarding the forms of the various substances. It is certain, however, that the love potion which Tristan and Isolde consume on the trip from Ireland to Cornwall is a liquid, since they confuse it with wine:

“... hie stât wîn
in disem vezzelîne.”
nein, ezn was niht mit wîne,
doch ez ime gelîch waere. (11670–73)

[... “here is some wine in this little bottle.” No, it held no wine, much as it resembled it. (194)]

So much has been written concerning the love potion,⁴¹ hence it would be a futile attempt to add significantly new perspectives by commenting at length on it;

40 Theseus, having killed the Minotaur, returned home to Athens on his ship; by previous arrangement, he was to fly white sails if his mission was successful, but his crew would fly black sails if he had been slain by the beast. Theseus forgot to raise the white sails, and therefore, when his father looked out to sea and spotted black sails on the vessel, he despaired and threw himself off a high cliff. See Edith Hamilton, *Mythology* (Boston, New York, et al.: Little, Brown and Co., 1942), 212–16.

41 Since the potion renders perhaps the central symbolic image of the tale, virtually all *Tristan* critics have commented on it to some extent, while others have made it the focus of their interpretations; see, for example, Walter Schröder, “Der Liebestrank in Gottfrieds *Tristan und Isolde*,” *Euphorion* 61 (1967): 21–35; Peter F. Ganz, “Minnetrank und Minne: zu Tristan, Z. 11707 f.,” *Formen mittelalterlicher Literatur: Festschrift für Siegfried Beyschlag*, ed. Otmar Werner and Bernd Naumann. Göppinger Arbeiten zur Germanistik, 25 (Göppingen: Kümmerle, 1970), 63–75; Irmgard Müller, “Liebestränke, Liebeszauber und Schlafmittel in der mittelalterlichen Literatur,” *Liebe – Ehe – Ehebruch in der Literatur des Mittelalters*, ed. Xenia von Ertzdorff and Marianne Wynne (Gießen: W. Schmitz, 1984), 71–87; Peggy Knapp, “The Potion/Poison of Gottfried's *Tristan*,” *Assays* 3 (1985): 41–56; Volker Mertens, “Bildersaal – Minnegrotte – Liebestrank: zu Symbol, Allegorie und Mythos im Tristanroman,” *Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Literatur* 117 (1995): 40–64; and Neil Thomas, “‘What Kind of Fool am I?’: The Tragi-Comedy of the Love-

however, considering it briefly from the viewpoint we have thus far developed on the nature of liquids in Gottfried's *Tristan* may offer some promising insights.

Throughout the tale Gottfried employs liquids, particularly water and blood, as metaphors and symbols to place the listener/reader into an attitude of receptiveness for a deeper meaning than what lies on the surface. As we have seen repeatedly, there is a consistent contrast between the civilization of the court, a human institution that is accustomed to focusing only on surface appearances and obvious phenomena, and the complexities and profundity of nature. Liquids are invariably associated with the latter, because they are "natural" substances and convey a variety of meanings. In Gottfried's development of the liquids' metaphorical structures, the love potion attains perhaps the highest and most excellent articulation of any, since it is the symbolic and concrete catalyst of the narrative, since a most capable creator (the elder Isolde) produces it, and because it leads the lovers, first, to the avowal of their love and, second, to their sexual union, the consummation of their love. Despite general agreement that the elixir of love is important, however, even the most cursory overview of the critical literature on Gottfried's potion reveals that there is virtually no consensus on the meaning of the potion, symbolic or otherwise, for the work.⁴²

Since the potion is a liquid similar in visual appearance to wine (and, one must assume that it mimics the texture, aroma, and flavor of wine as well),⁴³ it acquires certain associations with other features of wine that bear important, secondary significances. For example, one thinks of the wine transubstantiated into the blood of Christ during the celebration of the Catholic mass.⁴⁴ This association establishes a strong connection between the potion and the sacrament

Potion in the Thomas/Gottfried Branch of the Tristan Legend," *Behaving Like Fools: Voice, Gesture, and Laughter in Texts, Manuscripts, and Early Books*, ed. Lucy Perry and Alexander Schwarz. International Medieval Research, 17 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010), 259–76; see also Reiner Dietz, *Der Tristan Gottfrieds von Straßburg* (see note 1), 89–105.

⁴² See Sidney M. Johnson, "This Drink Will Be the Death of You: Interpreting the Love Potion in Gottfried's *Tristan*," *A Companion to Gottfried von Strassburg's "Tristan"* (see note 8), 87–112; Johnson selectively analyzes the main research trends on the potion and summarizes them here.

⁴³ Johnson ("This Drink Will Be the Death of You" [see note 8], 88–89), following Mertens's speculations, suggests that the drink "was an alcoholic herbal extract, that is, a wine mixed with herbs or a distillate of wine"; the variety of ingredients that may have been included in such an aphrodisiac is large and diverse, ranging from "opium, nightshade and hashish" to "anise, white mustard, and above all, vervain."

⁴⁴ Gottfried firmly establishes the connection to the Eucharist in his prologue, employing the language imagery of sacramental "bröt" to forge the link; see Mark Chinca, *Gottfried von Strassburg: Tristan. Landmarks of World Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 54–57.

of communion, supporting the possibility that the love relationship is a kind of *unio mystica* between the lovers, perhaps even including God;⁴⁵ however, the diametrically opposite evaluation maintained by many critics holds that this connection is blasphemous and may have caused Gottfried a good deal of trouble with the orthodoxy in power at that time.⁴⁶ In any case, the lovers' drinking of the potion clearly constitutes, symbolically or concretely, a binding together of their hearts. Whether their love is caused by the potion, or the potion represents the love that is already there, is perhaps a central issue for interpreting the work, which extends far beyond the necessary boundaries of this essay.⁴⁷

The love potion is a concoction prepared by Isolde's mother, who also bears the name Isolde;⁴⁸ she is Queen of Ireland, and possesses great wisdom, talents, and knowledge of the arts of healing and the secrets of the natural world.⁴⁹ Although she appears directly in the text for only very brief moments, the influence she bears on the course of what happens in the work exceeds perhaps that of any other single character outside of the central constellation of her daughter, Tristan, and King Mark. Much of what she accomplishes occurs near water or as the result of liquids, as the following examples illustrate. As we have seen, she is responsible for the poison on her brother, Môrolt's, sword, which wounds Tristan and causes him to come over the sea to Ireland. She heals Tristan/Tantris (perhaps using liquid medicines and certainly employing natural herbs to do so), and arranges that during his recovery and rehabilitation he would serve as tutor

45 See Bodo Mergell, *Tristan und Isolde: Ursprung und Entwicklung der Tristansage des Mittelalters* (Mainz: Kirchheim, 1949), 177–79; and Nigel Harris, “God, Religion, and Ambiguity in *Tristan*,” *A Companion to Gottfried von Strassburg’s “Tristan”* (see note 8), 113–36.

46 Some of the earliest critical commentary on Gottfried's *Tristan* (e. g., that of Karl Lachmann) condemns the work as “Üppigkeit oder Gotteslästerung”; see Nigel Harris, “God, Religion, and Ambiguity in *Tristan*,” *A Companion to Gottfried von Strassburg’s “Tristan”* (see note 8), 113–14.

47 Sidney M. Johnson, “*This Drink will Be the Death of You* (see note 42), 100–08, outlines most succinctly the critical discussions on this point.

48 Traditionally in the *Tristan* materials this was not the case, and Isolde the poisoner and healer and Isolde the Fair were usually one and the same person in previous *Tristan* texts; see Katja Altpeter-Jones, “Love Me, Hurt Me, Heal Me – Isolde Healer and Isolde Lover in Gottfried's *Tristan*,” *German Quarterly* 82 (2009): 5–23; see also Peter Meister, “Wounds and Healing in Gottfried's *Tristan*,” *Tristania* 13 (1987/88): 72–82; Ruthmarie H. Mitsch, “The Other Isolde,” *Tristania* 15 (1994): 75–85.

49 In this connection, see especially Albrecht Classen, “Matriarchy versus Patriarchy: The Role of the Irish Queen Isolde in Gottfried von Strassburg's ‘Tristan’” *Neophilologus* 73 (1989): 77–89; Anne Marie Rasmussen, “The Female Figures in Gottfried's *Tristan and Isolde*,” *A Companion to Gottfried von Strassburg’s “Tristan”* (see note 8), 137–57; and Albrecht Classen, “Female Agency and Power in Gottfried von Strassburg's *Tristan*: the Irish Queen Isolde: New Perspectives,” *Tristania* 23 (2004): 39–60.

to her daughter Isolde, thus bringing the two together. Later, when the Irish seneschal falsely claims to have killed the dragon, she accompanies her daughter on her search for the actual dragon slayer, and together they locate him – Tristan, lying in a pool of water. In the subsequent bath scene the elder Isolde tempers her daughter's impetuous threats, and eventually helps to broker the reconciliation between her family and Tristan. Therefore, it is no surprise that Queen Isolde's wedding gift to her daughter is a liquid, the love potion, ostensibly for the purpose of ensuring her happiness. Instead, the potion ensures the future misery of both Isolde the Fair and her lover, Tristan.

The effect of the potion on them is immediate. They begin to notice that each seeks to engage the other in conversation. They suddenly have much to say to one another, and look for opportunities to do this. They exhibit the signs of love-sickness,⁵⁰ and suddenly their lives change completely:

diu zwei diu wâren verdâht,
bekumberet beide
mit dem lieben leide,
daz solhiu wunder stellet:
daz honegende gellet,
daz süezende siuret,
daz towwende viuret,
daz senftende smerzet,
daz elliu herze entherzet
und al die werlt verkéret. (11880–89)

[The two lovers were lost in their thoughts. They were burdened by the pleasing malady that works such miracles as changing honey to gall, turning sweetness sour, setting fire to moisture, converting balm to pain; that robs hearts of their natures and stands the world on its head. (198)]

We can observe much ambiguity in this and in other passages regarding how the lovers feel after drinking the aphrodisiac,⁵¹ and it is difficult to determine whether

⁵⁰ See Katharina Philipowski, “*minne* als Krankheit,” *Neophilologus* 87 (2003): 411–33, who lists the symptoms that medieval Latin and Greek–Arabic medical texts claim as typical for love–sickness, such as “Blässe” (“paleness”), “Schwitzen” (“sweating”), but also “Sprachverlust durch Liebe” (“loss of the ability to speak because of love”), and “Blutspucken” (“spitting up blood”), which, as we have seen, are particularly interesting in the context of liquids in Gottfried’s *Tristan*; see also Mary Frances Wack, *Lovesickness in the Middle Ages* (see note 23), 63–66.

⁵¹ One of the most challenging problems facing the interpreter of Gottfried’s great work is the ambiguity that enters the text in numerous contexts; see, for example, Frances L. Decker, “The Epic ‘Scene’: Scenic Representation and Visual Ambiguity in Gottfried’s *Tristan*,” *German Studies Review* 4 (1981): 345–61; Kathleen J. Meyer, “The Ambiguity of Honor in Gottfried’s *Tristan*:

the potion functions as a medicine or a poison. That it has a profound effect on the lovers is beyond question, but there are clearly as many references to painful experience and sorrow as there are to pleasure and enjoyment. Like wine flowing through their veins, the potion serves as an intoxicant, with paradoxically ambiguous effects: it awakens their senses to new perceptions, it stimulates them to develop an intimate, metaphor-laden means of communicating with one another, but at the same time it causes them sorrow and at times even agony. In this way, the liquid nature of the potion links it symbolically to blood, which also has been shown to possess both toxic and healing properties: like blood, the potion flows through their veins and fills every inch of their being, supplying them with life but, at the same time, it makes them ill. Of course, both the potion and blood are symbolically linked to love itself, which also endangers their existence but becomes their very reason to exist. Thus, Gottfried establishes a tri-level symbolic connection between the potion, blood and love, all three of which alternately harm and heal, afflict and cure, and debilitate and empower the lovers.

As we have seen, for a brief period Tristan and Isolde enjoy moments of relative bliss, reveling in their love-making, even as they begin to dread their impending arrival in Cornwall. Their psychological state is conditioned by two liquids: the expanse of sea water lying between them and King Mark; and the influence of the love potion, which stokes the fires of their passion for one another. The language Gottfried employs to describe their time aboard the ship reflects the joy of new discovery typical of a new relationship:

Ich weiz wol, Tristan unde ïsôt,
 die gebitelôsen beide
 benâmen ouch ir leide
 unde ir triure ein ander vil,
 dô si begriffen daz zil
 gemeinses willen under in.
 jener gelange was dô hin,
 der die gedanken anget.
 swes gelieben gelanget,

Lines 17694–17769,” *Neophilologus* 70 (1986): 406–15; Irene Lanz-Hubmann, “*Nein unde jaMehrdeutigkeit im Tristan Gottfrieds von Straßburg: ein Rezipientenproblem*. Deutsche Literatur von den Anfängen bis 1700, 5 (Bern: Peter Lang, 1989); Troy Brian Meeker Wiwczaroski, “Desire, Ambiguity, and the Problem of Evil: Approaches to Gottfried von Strassburg’s ‘Tristan,’” Ph.D. diss. Washington University, St. Louis, 2000; and Nigel Harris, “God, Religion and Ambiguity in *Tristan*,” *A Companion to Gottfried von Strassburg’s “Tristan”*, (see note 8), 113–36; see also Rüdiger Schnell, *Suche nach Wahrheit* (see note 20), 130–33, who discusses an increasing degree of ambiguity in courtly culture affecting courts in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

des triben s'under in genuoc,
 sô sich diu zît alsô getruoc.
 sô sî z'ir state kâmen,
 si gâben unde nâmén
 mit getriuwelîchem sinne
 in selben unde der minne
 willegen zins unde zol.
 in was vil inneclîche wol
 an der reise und an der vart.
 dô diu vremede hine wart,
 dô was ir heinlîche
 rîlich unde rîche.
 und was daz wîsheit unde sin. (12358–79)

[I know that Tristan and Isolde, that eager pair, rid each other of a host of ills and sorrows when they reached the goal of their desire. The yearning that fetters thoughts was stilled. Whenever the occasion suited they had their fill of what lovers long for. When opportunity offered, they paid and exacted willing tribute from Love and from each other with faithful hearts. During that voyage they were in ecstasy. Now that their shyness was over they gloried and reveled in their intimacy, and this was wise and sensible. (204)]

Thus Gottfried paints the lovers' happiness and feeling of well-being while they remain out on the water and away from the realities facing them on the land. The description of such unbridled joy is unusual in the work, but it certainly typifies the first awakening of intimate feelings. The potion, flowing through their young blood and in combination with exhilaration of swift movement over the sea, seems to enhance the arousal of their senses and provides an exciting, entralling experience for them on the open waters. It is a psychologically accurate portrayal of what one would expect during the sexual awakening accompanying new love. Furthermore, it seems that as long as they dwell in nature they are subject to nature's "will," which apparently intends the consummation of their love and the associated happiness. This joy cannot last, however, and the nearer they draw to their destination in Cornwall and to the "civilization" of the court, the more fear enters their hearts in anticipation of the ordeals to come.

nu daz si Curnewâle
 gevouren alsô nâhen,
 daz sî daz lant wol sâhen,
 des vröuten sî sich alle dô.
 si wâren sîn alle vrô
 wan eine Tristan unde ïsôt.
 der angst was ez unde ir nôt.
 der wille waere der geschehen,
 sine haeten niemer lant gesehen. (12412–20)

[When they had sailed near enough to Cornwall to make out the land the whole company was delighted, all save Tristan and Isolde, to whom it brought dread and alarm. Had they had their way, they would never have seen land. (204)]

As the young lovers look ahead to their arrival in Cornwall, they realize they will enter into a period of guarded conversations, surreptitious glances and clandestine meetings; of course, their greatest wish would be never to see land again. Land, which for Tristan had been the place where he had earlier proven himself to be the most capable Cornish knight, basking in the glow of his uncle's love, now represents the environment where he and his lover must live by their wits, cloak their authentic feelings, and dissemble in front of their closest friends and advisors, merely to survive. Remaining on the sea would mean living a natural, idyllic existence and loving one another without fear of discovery, much like the kind of existence the environment of the *minnegrotte* will later provide for them. In this way the sea, where the lovers are initially under the influence of love as it is symbolized by the love potion, becomes a first *locus amoenus* for the free expression of their passion and intimacy, and one of the two most symbolically significant natural spaces of Gottfried's epic poem.

Conclusion

Thus, in Gottfried's *Tristan* liquids play significant roles, which include spatial, corporal, and semiotic functions. Water provides surroundings over which characters travel (the sea) and into which they submerge (the bath, a pool). The sea enables rapid transportation but also serves as a boundary to keep others out (e.g., in the battle scene between Tristan and Môrolt). In these usages, liquids (particularly the sea) operate not only as catalysts that move the plot forward, but they also support the health and well-being (or the opposite) of characters, such as in transporting Tristan to Queen Isolde to heal him from Môrolt's wound, or in providing the lovers with the opportunity to imbibe the love potion, which becomes “ir leben, it töt” (237; “their life, their death” [44]).

As we have also seen, liquids additionally supply directly palliative and salubrious benefits: they can be consumed (such as water, wine, the potion) and constitute the internal liquid that is an essential element of human anatomy (blood). In one context they can reveal a person at a moment of extreme vulnerability (such as in the bath) but in another situation they hide a person from view (e.g., when Tristan lies in a pool), thus serving not only hygienic purposes, but protective ends as well. However, they also can threaten a person's health, as one

witnesses in the scene of bloodletting where Tristan's blood is exposed on his and Isolde's bed coverings.

Finally, liquids function as semiotic objects, either conveying signs or serving as the sign *per se*. In this role, liquids reveal significances that only an individual initiated in how to read such signs can comprehend. In this role, liquids achieve the status of metaphor and symbol, raising the consciousness of the characters and of the listener/reader as well. It is a technique the author employs again and again, with numerous objects imbued with meanings obscure to all but the enlightened few (the lovers and the audience) who can read them. It provides Gottfried an opportunity to forge a link between the lovers and the members of his audience, many of whom may question the moral and ethical virtues of two adulterers. Reading signs as the lovers do perhaps enables the audience to understand them better, and perhaps to participate somewhat in their "liep unde leit" (206; "joy and sorrow" [44]).

In our discussion of liquids in Gottfried's *Tristan*, it has also become clear that the liquids under discussion are associated with nature (even the aphrodisiac concoction produced by Queen Isolde is associated with her natural wisdom and knowledge of the secrets of nature). We have also seen how each of the liquids exerts a strong influence over the action of the tale, serving as a direct cause of, or offering an advantageous environment for, many of its most crucial, significant, or even "miraculous" events. Thus, when one speculates about the surprising role God plays in enabling Tristan and Isolde to dissemble regarding their activities even while under the scrutiny of many inimical eyes, and to participate without detection in their passionate, adulterous affair, it would perhaps serve better ends to link the lovers' successes to the active role played by nature, perhaps as an instrument of Divine Providence, or perhaps as an agency unto itself. In any case, liquids operate to the advantage of the lovers and to the disadvantage of the courtly *status quo* in the vast majority of their occurrences.

It is clear that each of these liquids bears a metaphorical/symbolical connection beyond its surface manifestation. As one might expect, in a tale that concerns itself intensely with the psychology and the emotional states of the main characters, liquids offer convenient instruments for inducing feelings of illness or well-being, and in many cases a liquid substance becomes a directly observable medium for disease or health. However, a basic problem in the text arises, because the manifestations are ambiguous: as we have repeatedly seen, what constitutes a remedy from one perspective may actually amount to a toxin from another perspective. The ambiguity creates the possibility for interpretation, for reading on a deeper level, since a one-to-one correspondence between object and meaning does not seem to exist. However, the explicit objective, to bring the audience to a deeper understanding through contemplation of what amounts to

a coincidence of opposites, is uniquely programmatic in Gottfried's text. He presents his formula in perhaps the best known passage of the work, the final lines of prologue:

Deist aller edelen herzen brôt.
 hie mite sô lebet ir beider tôt.
 wir lesen ir leben, wir lesen ir tôt
 und ist uns daz süeze alse brôt.

Ir leben, ir tôt sint unser brôt.
 sus lebet ir leben, sus lebet ir tôt.
 sus lebent si noch und sint doch tôt
 und ist ir tôt der lebenden brôt.

Und swer nu ger, daz man im sage
 ir leben, ir tôt, ir vröude, ir clage,
 der biete herze und ôren her:
 er vindet alle sîne ger. (233–44)

[This is bread to all noble hearts. With this their death lives on. We read their life, we read their death, and to us it is sweet as bread. This life, their death are our bread. Thus lives their life, thus lives their death. Thus they live still and yet are dead, and their death is the bread of the living. And whoever now desires to be told of their life, their death, their joy, their sorrow, let him lend me his heart and ears – he shall find all that he desires! (44)]

Life and death, sorrow and joy, thus merge and are “consumed” (like Eucharistic bread) by the audience through their reading and understanding of Gottfried's tale of the lovers, in much the same manner as the audience would read and comprehend the metaphors created by Gottfried based on liquids. In her or his reading of the scenes where the lovers travel over water, consume the love potion, or engage in some other way with liquids, the reader confronts a coincidence of opposites and learns, as the lovers learn, the correct way to read metaphorical language. Thus, the simultaneous occurrence of medicinal and toxic, or sustaining and endangering effects in these fluids challenges the reader to discover their multiple layers of meaning, and enables them through their interpretations to participate fully in the elite social community of *edele herzen*, to whom Gottfried addresses his epic poem.⁵²

⁵² See the contribution to this volume by Belle Tuten, “The *Necessitas Naturae* and Monastic Hygiene.”

Jean E. Jost

The Ambiguous Effects of Water and Oil in Middle English Romance: Acknowledged and Ignored

Of all the elemental forces, the aquatic is perhaps the most densely charged with significance and symbolism, since its domain extends from the most minor everyday drop to the deepest ocean, and its practical functions have always been of the greatest importance: as a refreshing and life-giving agent, as a key source of motive power, and as a geopolitical boundary marker.

Brian J. Levy, *The Comic Text*, 121.¹

Throughout the Middle Ages, water and oil have been a force for good and ill, offering healing, pain, and sometimes death, both literally and spiritually, especially in Middle English romances such as *The Awntyrs off Arthur at the Terne Wathelyne*, *Ywain and Gawain*, and *Sir Tristrem*. The sources of these waters may be small refreshing springs, marshy plains, pools ensuring health and proper hydration, magic potions, baths, healing unguents or ointments, or the expansive dangerous seas. Interestingly, however, many of these water or oil sources are not presented or understood by the characters or authors as shocking, and sometimes not even magical or supernatural, but merely natural or expected phenomena which further the plot. As John Finlayson points out:

It is generally agreed that the marvelous, though not confined to romance, is essential and ubiquitous in the genre and also that the hero and presumably the author, very rarely seem disturbed by its presence, as we ourselves might be ... Critics, from W. P. Ker onwards, notice the almost poker-faced presentation of potentially sensational material ... All [these critics] are agreed ... in remarking on the lack of sensational reaction and full-blooded exploitation in the romances.²

A perfect example of accomplishing this method of downplaying the sensational is the use of ordinary water or water-and-oil-based ointments. Rarely do the char-

1 Brian J. Levy, *The Comic Text: Patterns and Images in the Old French Fabliaux*. Etudes des langues et littérature françaises publiées, 186 (Amsterdam and Atlanta: Rodopi, 2000), 121.

2 John Finlayson, “The Marvelous in Middle English Romance,” *Chaucer Review* 33.4 (1999): 363–408; here 363–64.

acters respond surprisingly to this ubiquitous, magical substance, but usually take it for granted without comment. But there are exceptions, as this first case will indicate.

I The Awntyrs off Arthur at the Terne Wathelyne

The Awntyrs off Arthur at the Terne Wathelyne, finding the marshy, watery plains a perilous source of the supernatural, a manifestation of purgatory on earth, begins on a beautiful, orderly May morning as the hunt gets under way, very much in the tradition of all medieval courtly romances:

Eche lorde withouten lete
 To an oke he hem sette,
 With bowe and with barselette [hound]
 Under the bowes [boughs]. (36–39)³

Here Gawain and Gaynour are riding along the hillsides, as the lords and their dogs await their prey under sturdy oaks and boughs. This outside terrain sets the scene for the plot, and, while lovely, contains little emotional connotation that would justify the term “place”; they remain elements of space. The distinction between space and place can be demarcated by seeing space as physical geography and place as humanistic or emotional geography. Molly Robinson Kelly suggests of the latter:

For human beings, real spaces are not just impersonal measurements of extension; they hold different meanings depending on who we are. We associate spaces with what has been experienced there, and this interplay between experience and space infuses space with an emotional charge and value beyond that of a neutral receptacle for our lives ... Space can bring characters comfort or fear, make them safe or place them in peril, connect them to loved ones or remind them of their absence; very often space *means something* to literary characters ... I will call this type of space *place*.⁴

³ This and subsequent quotations from this romance are taken from *Sir Gawain: Eleven Romances and Tales*, ed. Thomas Hahn. Teams Middle English Texts Series (Kalamazoo, MI: Western Michigan University Publications, 1995).

⁴ Molly Robinson Kelly, *The Hero's Place: Medieval Literary Traditions of Space and Belonging* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2009), 1 and 10.

Further, “the stremys so strange [strong] that swiftly swoghes [rush / threaten] the deer and worchen hem wo” [cause them woe] (55), the first hint of marvels and danger associated with water which no one acknowledges. But soon we encounter

Fast bifore undir [mid-mornning] this ferly [marvel] con [did] fall
 ... this meckel mervaille that I shal of mene [tell].
 Now wol I of this mervaille mele, if I mote
 The day wex als dirke
 As hit were mynicht myrke;
 Thereof the King was irke [distressed] ...
 [Knights] ranne faste to the roches, for reddoure [severity] of the raynne
 For the sneterand snewe [driving hail] snartly hem snelles [keenly them stings].
 (72–77, 81–82)

Suddenly the peaceful scene has turned raucous and noisy with clattering hail as the next scene begins. The threatening, boisterous sight, sound, and touch of this harsh hail signifies a radical, bilateral change of venue, from the calm, natural, warm world to the disruptive, supernatural chilling environment, from safe rolling hills to dangerous boggy swampland. Is it an eclipse of the sun – heavenly and earthly – or an apparition of earth and hell?

That hail ushers in an even more formidable threat in the image of a screaming ghost “in the lyknes of Lucyfere, laytheste [most loathly] in Helle” (84), emerging from a watery bogland. Immediately the focus has shifted from comfortable May warmth to clattering May hail to the yowling spirit in this marsh. The intimidating shape glides over to the gate to block Sir Gawain’s escape: “Yauland and yomerand [howling and wailing], with many loude yelle. / Hit yaules [cries out], hit yameres, with waymynges wete [lamentations tearful]” (86–87). Cursing the body who bore it, the screaming visage sighs heavily as it despairs and wails. No wonder Gaynour fearfully howls, calling it “the grisselist goost that ever herd I grede [moan]” (99). In this extreme case of an exceedingly frightful, yelling specter, the characters do in fact acknowledge rather than ignore the unusual nature of the apparition while it pursues them.

The scene has promptly moved from a joyful May hunt to an ambiguously shaped landmass, a marshy quagmire of land and water, embodying both this world and the next, in a soggy, wet field. Here the earthly spectators Gawain and Gaynour encounter the supernatural witness of the other world in the figure of Gaynour’s ghostly mother. This skeletal specter emerges from purgatory through the binary watery marshland to emit both human language and unearthy screeches. The watery terrain brings both visitors face-to-face with this fearful, shocking vision:

Bare was the body and blak to the bone,
 Al biclagged in clay uncomly cladde.
 Hit waried [cursed], hit wayment [wailed] as a woman
 But on hide [skin] ne on huwe [complexion] no heling [covering] hit hadde.
 Hit stemered, hit stonayde [was stunned], hit stode as a stone,
 Hit marred, hit memered [murmered], hit mused for madde
 [it groaned as one mad]

...

On the chef [top] of the cholle [neck],
 A pade pikes [toad bites] on the polle [into the skull],
 With eighen holked [eyes sunken] ful holle [hollow]
 That gloed as the gledes [coals]...
 Serkeled with serpentes all aboute the sides-. (105–10, 114–17, 120)

Enshrouded in serpents and covered in toads, the watery corpse is a hideous reminder of sin and corruption. The greyhounds and birds nearby hide or shriek. When the specter speaks she claims ancestry from bold kings, but admits now:

God has me geven of his grace
 To dre [suffer] my paynes in this place.
 I am comen in this cace [time]
 To speke with your Quene. (140–43)

This unlikely, inverted purgatory is a water-drenched area with one fiery coal of a ghost inhabiting it. The audience is shocked to learn of her past high nobility and status, wealth and castles, mountains and valleys, pleasures and mirth, possessing more than does Dame Gaynour. Now she is caught without kin in this cold, wet place. Couched in clay, she is dolefully treated, for as she tells her daughter, “Lo, how delful deth has thi dame dight!” (160). Having described her glorious past, she remorsefully laments

Now I am a graceles gost, and grisly I gron;
 With Lucyfer in a lake logh [deep] am I light [sunk].
 Thus am I lyke to Lucefere; takis witnes [warning] by mee! ...
 Muse on my mirrour;
 For, king and emperour,
 Thus dight [treated] shul ye be. (163–65, 167–69)

The speechless Gaynour and Gawain watch the specter’s physically and spiritually debased body, and listen to the ghost’s lamentations in amazement.

... I, in danger and doel [sorrow], in dongone I dwelle [languish],
 Naxté [Nasty] and nedefull, naked on night.
 Ther folo me a ferde [troop] of fendes of helle;

They hurle me unhendely [rudely]; thei harme [lacerate] me in hight [violently].
In bras [cauldron] and in brymston I bren [burn] as a belle [bonfire]. (184–88)

When Gaynour asks the cause of her mother's downfall, she is directly told:

That is luf paramour, listes [pleasures] and delites
That has me light [low] and left logh in a lake [deep in a lake]. (213–14)

Further, Gaynour and Gawain receive a complete discourse from that figure from a wet purgatory regarding how to avoid the pitfalls of sin. First, pride is the primary downfall of women who revel in their appearance, so be vigilant, she warns. The virtues to practice include:

Mekenesse and mercy, thes ar the moost [greatest];
And sithen have pité on the poer, that pleses Heven king.
Sithen charité is chef, and then is chaste,
And then almessedede aure [over] al other thing. (250–53)

In speaking to Gawain, the specter advises:

Your king is to covetous, I warne the sir knight.
May no man stry him with strength while his whèle stondes.
[fortune is on his side]
Whan he is in his magesté, moost in his might,
He shal light [fall] ful lowe on the sesondes [sea shore]. (265–68)

She finally prophesies that Gawain will be overrun by rich Romans, rents will be taken over by the Round Table, and “Then shal a Tyber untrue tymber you tene” [The treacherous Tiber shal cause you woe] (282). Once again, water promises to punish the sinner if he fails to remedy the sin. Despite the grotesquerie presented, however, Gaynor and Gawain soon recover from their fear and engage in an extended conversation with the supernatural phantom.

The ghost's purpose is to warn her still-earthly daughter and the accompanying Gawain, an apparently thoughtful method of saving them from the disaster of the supernatural world. Her message of salvation for Gaynour is to avoid the excesses of sexual sins that put her into this hell. Her message of salvation for Gawain is to avoid the sin of greed and usurpation of others' lands that would put him into hell. Unfortunately, neither character is capable of heeding the advice of the screeching and suffering water-logged spirit. Although these potentially baptismal waters from whence the ghost emerged were intended to save the two, the recipients were unable to profit from the experience during their lifetimes. These life-healing waters were insufficient to change these major figures in the

Round Table, and hence the entire society. Although the ghostly figure presents much sensational sensory detail to threaten the bystanders, the marshy lands ultimately take on the element of innocuous backdrop; they offer no permanent impact on Gaynor and Gawain such that they should produce such a horrendous character who herself absorbs all their shock and trauma. The supernatural spell is broken when the ghost glides away, the skies unclose, and the King startles everyone with his bugle-blowing. Surprisingly, Gawain and Gaynor walk away with seemingly little affect, not particularly stunned by the water's weird presentation or the words she uttered.

Rather, the contrapuntal structure of this romance distracts the characters and the audience from the lesson in what Anthony Spearing compares to a diptych⁵; it is elucidated by Thomas Hahn in this way as:

... a conventional medieval form, in which two separate framed objects are physically joined into a unity by a hinge; in such a doubled structure, meaning is produced not simply through a continuous harmony of parts, but through the collision this manifestly split structure sets up. A dialogic vision of this sort produced no rigidly moralized or single meaning.⁶

Indeed, each of our romances can be seen as possessing two halves of a contesting diptych: very explicitly in *The Awntyrs off Arthure* in the ghostly encounter and the conflict with Galeron, before and after Ywain's madness in *Ywain and Gawain*, and before and after the effects of the magic love potion in *Sir Tristrem*. Furthermore, in this initial romance we are discussing, we find the first aquatic motif noted by Brian J. Levy, in the form of a damp marshy bog extending over land, much like a river. Levy's point about *fabliaux* likewise pertain to the romance since:

... the remarkably consistent triple function of water ... [is found] in three well-defined but interlaced categories of motif: the River, the Fountain, and the Bath... [I]mmersion in the flowing waters of a river represents a particularly unpleasant 'baptism', symbolizing neither hope nor life, but rather a physical degradation very often culminating in death itself.⁷

Indeed, Gaynor's mother is experiencing this unpleasant "baptism," offering her neither hope nor life, but indicating a humiliating re-entry to warn her daughter

⁵ A. C. Spearing, "The Awntyrs off Arthure," *The Alliterative Tradition in the Fourteenth Century*, ed. Bernard S. Levy and Paul E. Szarmach (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1981), 186–87.

⁶ *Sir Gawain: Eleven Romances and Tales*, ed. Thomas Hahn. Teams Middle English Texts Series (Kalamazoo, MI: Western Michigan University Publications, 1995), 170.

⁷ Levy, *The Comic Text* (see note 1), 124–25.

of sexual perils. The second romance considered, *Ywain and Gawain*, presents the tumultuous Fountain of Danger numerous times within that tale, but ultimately grants salvation. Here, too, Ywain is bathed in an aromatic ointment to reclaim his spirit from madness, and redress his miserable state. In the third romance, *Sir Tristrem*, the suffering Tristrem enjoys a relaxing and healing bath given by the Queen to relieve his pain. Ultimately, he reverts to the open spaces of a river and beyond to the sea where he drinks the precarious love potion with which Dame Fortuna dooms him. Despite the many joys he shares with Isolde, the finale can only represent a tragic ending of a conflicted life.

Part Two of *The Awntyrs off Arthur* presents a counter to Part One in many respects. Whereas the initial interrupting storm of the May morning brought rain, hail, and all manner of unnatural cold, the beautiful young maiden introducing Part Two wears a grass-green dress and cloak embroidered with burnished gold birds, signifying a natural, warm, spring environment. Whereas Gaynour's mother wears horrifying toads on her head, the visiting lady offers a contrasting image:

Here fax [hair] in fyne perre [jewels] was fretted in folde [arranged in pleats],
 Contrefelet [ribbon] and kelle [head-dress] coloured full clene [brightly],
 With a crowne craftly al of clene [finely wrought] gold. (368–70)

Whereas Gaynour's mother wears nothing on her frightening skeleton, the young maiden is decked out in dramatically colored, textured garments. On the other hand, the request of the maiden to Arthur about her errant knight “Do him reson and right / For thy manhede” (349–50) echoes the warning of the ghostly specter to Gawain “Your King is to covetous, I warne the sir knight” (265). Arthur's harsh bugle-blowing introduces Part Two, while the “soteler [musician] with a symballe” (343) gently heralds the young woman's arrival. The screeching sounds and threatening sights in the ghost's watery bog parallel the excessively chivalric dinner- entertainment hosted by Gawain for the young maiden and her elaborately decked-out knight. Here, not the uncomfortable watery lands of the spirit accompany the conversation, but rather “vernage [wine] inveres [in glasses] and cuppes ful clene [full brimmed]” (457). In the marshy wetlands, Gaynour's mother instructs Gaynour and Gawain on fairness and morality, while on a fair field of equality named Plumpton Land, Galeron demands knightly combat with him over the territories Arthur has usurped from him – and also seeks justice and morality.

The audience of Gaynour's mother, the first speaker, consists of Gawain and Gaynour, while that of Galeron, the second speaker, consists of the entire courtly hunting party. Although Gaynor's mother relates her story dispiritedly, having

completed her life, the knight speaks energetically, and initially competes spiritedly, being still in the game. The boggy wet otherworldly terrain of the ghost is replaced by the natural green grass on which the knights compete. Although that soggy land of the spirit represents the purgatory from which she emerged, it presents no immediate danger to Gaynour or Gawain; the battleground of the knights, however, offers clear and present danger to their lives. In fact the neck wound Gawain first receives “greved Gawayne to his dethday” (515), and the returned blow from Gawain’s sword “gloppened that gay” [stunned Galeron] (530). The death of his horse Grissell incenses Gawain to attack Galeron in anger, striking him to the ground; Galeron pursues Gawain with a sharp sword to retaliate. The brutality of the battle engenders watery tears, for “Thus wepus for wo Wowayn the wight” (560), and “Thus gretis [weeps] Gaynour with bothe her grey yene” (599). Finally, “Gawayn bi the coler [collar] keppes [captures] the knight. / Then his leman [lover] onloft skrilles [screams] and skrikes [shrieks] (618–19) to bring the situation to a climax. It is time for the blood, sweat, and tears – the waters of battle – to be halted.

The human blood spread across the terrain is a counter to the cleansing waters which heal rather than damage. The young maiden begs Gaynour for a reprieve, an end to the conflict, a resolution, so the Queen beseeches Arthur to arrange an accord. The relieved Galeron acknowledges Gawain’s super-human strength, promises homage, and releases Gawain of rents and payments. After Arthur commands peace, the other combatants – with “buffetes and blode, her blees [faces] wex blak” – raise their hands in agreement. The gracious Galeron then awards Gawain all the lands in question and Gawain reciprocates, giving Galeron many of his lands, and the promise of future support. All the astonishing excesses of the battle and debilitating wounds are promptly healed by surgeons, put to rest, forgotten, unheeded. Finlayson’s claim of lack of impact is again implemented. The final reconciliation at the end of bloody wounds and distressful tears is the integration of Sir Galeron into the Round Table. Paralleling the masses Gaynor had said for her suffering mother’s spirit, she now asks religious throughout the lands for masses in celebration of the unification of Arthurian lands, themselves macro-spaces, under these two harmonious Knights. The horror of war has been set aside and forgotten as Church bells ring to solemnize the union of antagonists in the Round Table.

Both halves of this romance present the moral actions of a Christian Knight or Lady: theoretically, in Part I, in the voice of the mournful ghost who has failed her test, but would instruct the next generation, and practically, in Part II, in which Christian charity is posited in Gawain’s surrender of his lands to Galeron, and Gaynour’s arrangement for the trental of masses for her mother’s soul. While both missives are immediately legitimate, neither the sensational figures nor the

messages behind each messenger carry over permanently into the lives of the witnesses. Finally, Gaynour's mother suffers, although she may be helped by the trental of ninety masses her daughter provides; ultimately, the Round Table falls because the dreadful water spirit's messages were not finally heard and heeded, although they are temporarily enacted with a military reconciliation. John Finlayson's contention above noting "the lack of sensational reaction and full-blooded exploitation in the romances" can clearly been found in "The Awntyrs off Arthure at the Terne Wathelyne," which may explain the Round Table's final failure. The role of water and blood in these two segments enacts this narrative conflict, highlighting the importance of sexual and military restraint which, however, are ultimately ignored.

II Ywain and Gawain

Ywain and Gawain relates the story of Colgrevance telling his fellow knights and the curious Guinevere his recent intriguing adventure. This water-bound tale is recounted multiple times, first by Colgrevance as he learns about his upcoming adventure, then when he actually engages in it, third, when Ywayne returns to avenge him for the poor treatment accorded him, fourth when King Arthur arrives, and fifth, at the conclusion when Ywayne returns to Alundyne. Six years prior, Colgrevance set out to seek adventure when he rode through the forest of wild animals meeting an ugly giant with a club in his hand who controls the surrounding beasts. The giant offers Colgrevance the marvelous adventure he has been seeking, a mysterious water place:

The well is under the fairest tre
That ever was in this cuntré,
By that well hinges [hangs] a bacyne (basin)
That is of gold gude and fyne,
With a cheyne, trewly to tell,
That wil reche into the well.
Thare es a chapel nere tharby,
That nobil es an ful lufely.
By the well standes a stane;
Tak the bacyn sone onane [quickly]

And cast on water [on the stone] with thi hand,
And sone thou sal se new tithand [tidings].⁸ (325–36)

Ironically, it is the threatening giant who presents Colgrevance with the watery marvel that comprises the core of the story. After crossing a moat, symbol of transition, he discovers the basin, a well of cold water, and a magnificent emerald resting on rubies. The scene is reminiscent of the magical Celtic folk-tales that underpin this and its source in Chrétien de Troyes. That giant warns that

A storm sal rise and a tempest
Al obout, by est and west;
Thou sal here many thonor-blast [thunderblasts]
Al obout the [you] blowand fast [blowing fiercely]
And thare sall cum slik slete and rayne
That unnese [scarcely] sal thou stand ogayne;
Of lightness [brightness] sal thou se a lowe [flame]. (326–32)

If you survive this onslaught, he continues, then you will have the fairest chance of survival of any knight who comes to proclaim his might. But the reality is even more dramatic than the prediction. Colgrevance reports:

I fand [found] the bacyn [basin] als he talde,
And the wel with water kalde.
An amerawd [emerald] was the stane –
Richer saw I never nane –
On fowre rubyes on heght standand.
Thaire light lasted over al the land,
And when I saw that semely syght,
It made me bath joyful and lyght.
I toke the bacyn sone onane [immediately]
And helt [poured] water opon the stane. (359–68)

This action of drawing well water into the basin and splashing it onto the stones will be ritually repeated as each contender is initiated into this baptism of adventure. The results of this initiation are extreme, as Colgrevance indicates:

The weder wex than wonder blak,
And the thoner [thunder] fast gan crak

⁸ *Perceval of Galles and Ywain and Gawain*, ed. Mary Flowers Braswell. TEAMS Middle English Texts Series (Kalamazoo, MI: Western Michigan University – Medieval Institute Publications, 1995). This and all subsequent quotations of this poem derive from this text.

Thare com slike stormes of hayl and rayn,
 Unnethes I might stand thare ogayn;
 The store [strong] windes blew ful lowd,
 So kene come never are of [before from] clowd
 I was drevyn with snaw and slete,
 Unnethes I might stand on my fete.
 In my face the levening smate [lightening smote]
 I wend have brent, so was it hate [hot]. (369–78)

The bruising weather made him think his death was imminent, and certainly if it lasted long, he would never leave that place. In this case, water is a threatening and damaging force which leads to further adventures, including an entry into another mysterious realm. However, this immediate deluge of water brings no salvation or respite to Colgrevance, but only a confrontation with Death. He claims this violent kind of baptism into a new adventure is stopped by Christ's wounds, furthering the religious overtones of the experience. As fair weather replaces the frightful, birds sing merrily; but soon the threatening Knight of the Forest arrives asking why Colgrevance so injured him with that tumultuous weather which disturbed his rest. Indeed, he must pay for this interruption!

Overmatched in size and strength by the Knight, Colgrevance was stunned as his horse was removed from him and he was left unprotected.

He bad that I sold tel him tite [immediately],
 Why I did him swike [such] despite [wrong],
 With wederes wakened him of rest
 And done him wrang in his forest. (409–12)

Since the bumbling Colgrevance has no response, he is invited to battle with the oversized Knight who decimates him and takes his horse. He soon returns home where he shares his experience with the Court. Although Colgrevance graphically represents the extreme weather experience he endured, he speaks of it unemotionally, as past and factual, without current consequence.

After hearing his story, the intrigued Ywayne soon steals away to replicate the adventure of his cousin-germane Colgrevance, to avenge his shame, and that of Arthur's Court, for losing the battle, and to win merit for himself. When Ywayne encounters Colgrevance's enemy, his military prowess surpasses both Colgrevance's and the Knight of the Forest's. After he duplicates his cousin's steps, repeating the water-drenching of the magic stones, the forewarned Ywayne likewise encounters the formidable Knight of the Forest and "at the last Syr Ywayne / On his felow kyd [made known] his mayne [strength] (657–58). The dying Knight retreats speedily, but unlike Colgrevance, Ywayne does not run away. Rather, he

follows the bleeding Knight of the Forest into the castle gate where he is caught within by the portcullis as his horse is sliced in two. His new adventure now begins!

Enter Lunet, the maid and confidant of the Lady Alundyne, who tells Ywayne he must die “For my lord that thou hast slain” (704), noting Lady Alundyne and the Knight’s friends are mourning. But when Lunet discovers Ywayne’s identity, she agrees to help him, lending him a magic ring of invisibility, for past kindnesses. Thus when vengeance-seekers attend the Lord’s funeral and search for the perpetrator afterward, Ywayne remains safely unseen on Lunet’s bed. But as soon as Ywayne sees the Lady Alundyne from a window, he falls deeply in love with her, even while acknowledging the difficulty of their love. The wise maid Lunet, however, reminds Alundyne that she needs a protector of her lands, her well, her castle, her tower, and herself from King Arthur’s vengeance for Colgrevant’s treatment – and who is stronger than the knight who defeated her Lord? When Lady Alundyne convinces her council of knights, the joyous Ywayne weds his love.

Soon Arthur arrives and the tumultuous scene of water-saturation is again repeated:

The king kest water on the stane;
 The storme rase ful sone onane
 With wikked weders, kene and calde,
 Als it was byforehand talde.
 The king and his men ilkane [each one]
 Wend [thought] tharwith to have bene slane,
 So blew it store with slete and rayn;
 And hastily than Syr Ywayne
 Dight him graythly in his gere
 With nobil shelde and strong spere.
 When he was dight in seker wede,
 Than he umstrade a nobil stede. (1291–302)

Once again, the characters endure untold anguish and marvels, acknowledge them, and promptly forget them, seeming to take the miraculous for granted. This time, the watery storm introduces the company to the accommodating husband Ywayne who easily overcomes the challenging Sir Kay, unaware of who his competitor is. Ywayne, now in charge of the fountain, rather than an enemy seeking revenge for bringing on the winter, meets Arthur’s coterie. His victory over the water-deluge signifies an acceptance and salvation since this castle is now part of Arthur’s entourage.

Subsequently, in Part II, when Ywayne leaves his love Lady Alundyne for one year of chivalric service with Arthur’s knights, he fails to return, and realizing

his transgression, goes insane: “For wa [sorrow] he wex [became] al wilde and wode” (1650) – this is the same motif, of course as in Chrétien de Troyes’ *Yvain* and Hartmann von Aue’s *Iwein*. Alone in the forest, he drinks another liquid, warm venison blood: “And that did him mekil gode” (1670), as well as consuming water and bread provided by a hermit, which preserve his life. After several years of this insane life, a lady and two maidens ride past and dismount when one recognizes Sir Ywayne. She pities him, saying with tearful cheeks, “It es gret sorwe that he sold be / So ugly now opon to se” (1729–30). The Lady claims a remedy at her house, another salvific liquid, this time of oil, will cure him:

For thare I have an unement [unguent] dere,
 Morgan the Wise gaf it to me
 As said als I sal tel to the
 He said, “This unement es so gode,
 That if a man be braynwode
 And he war anes anoynt with yt,
 Smertly, sold he have his wit.” (1752–58)

Like water, but unlike spilled blood of battle, the unguent is a force for healing and relief from the anguish of pain or other disasters, such as insanity. The Lady instructs her maids to apply the valuable oils sparingly for “Unto me it is ful dere” (1764), and return the unused portion to her. The maids fail to follow her injunction, however, for they anoint his head and body well and dispense all the unguent upon the naked man. The oils soon magically take effect. When Ywayne first comes out of his state of madness, he is weak, cannot stand, and has no knowledge of how he got there. But indeed, the application of oil, an unambiguous salutary substance, heals Ywayne, and returns his health to its former salubrious state. Its salvific qualities liberate his mind, allowing him to return to his normal psychological state, and his love. Its healthful benefits parallel those of water as a cleansing agent or refreshing, cooling instrument. Neither Ywayne nor any other character is surprised by this magical cure, for it is taken as a matter of course by this author in his tale.

In stark contrast to healing waters and healthful unguent is the deadly spilling of human blood in battle. In this romance, Gawain agrees to support an elder sister in a case of a conflict over the inheritance. When her disenfranchised younger sister begs help from Ywayne, King Arthur sets up a trial by battle to resolve the argument. Since neither Gawain nor Ywayne know the identity of the other, the two engage in severe conflict, dangerously spilling blood on both sides:

The blode out of thaire bodies ren.
 On helmes thai gaf slike [such] strakes [strokes] kene

That the riche stanes [jewels on their armor] al bidene
 And other gere that was ful gude,
 Was covered al in blode. (3544–48)

The force of blood here signifies a lack of health and perilous condition for both contenders, quite contrary to the healing waters and unguent elsewhere in the romance. The profuse nature of the human blood everywhere indicates its seriousness. Nor was the ordeal short, for

On this wise lasted that fight
 Fra midmorn unto mirk night;
 And by that tyme, I trow, thai twa
 War ful weri and sare [sore] alsua.
 Thai had bled so mekil blode,
 It was grete ferly that thai stode;
 So sare thai bet on bak and brest,
 Until the sun was gone to rest. (3605–10)

Fortunately, the knights resolved their conflict when they discovered each other's identities, and Arthur ensured the sisters' settlement in a just fashion. Again, no one is surprised by this eventuality, despite the violence of the conflict.

Previously, on Lunet and Ywayne's journey to resolve this conflict, they encounter the desperate young silk maidens, suffering severe troubles

Of hunger, of threst [thirst], and of calde;
 And ever onane that weped all,
 Als thai wald to water fall [as if they would turn to water]. (2974–76)

Here, water symbolizes both their tears and their disastrous lives, devoid of human nourishment, to which they are subject when forced into poverty and slave labor while making silk for the gentry. On Ywayne's last visit to the well, the final storm and thunderous lightening is engineered by Lunet who elicits Alundine's promise to straighten out the love life of this brave Knight with a Lion. As in the battle of the unknown competitors Gawain and Ywayne, Lady Alundine does not know the Knight with the Lion is her long-lost husband. Her forgiveness resolves the romance, allowing the healing waters of life and the healing balm of sacred oils to eclipse the life-threatening loss of human blood from conflict.

III Sir Tristrem

The Middle English *Sir Tristrem* utilizes water in several ways, which ironically both brings the lovers Tristrem and Ysonde together and ultimately separates them. The recurrent pattern of travel across the seas and the other references to water in its many but ordinary forms also diminish the sense of the marvelous in the overall schema of the tale. Tristrem himself is a character of multiple identities, partly because he does not know his parentage as a young boy, but magically winds up at his uncle King Mark of Cornwall's court across the seas. Jean-Charles Payen reminds us that in the *Folie d'Oxford*, "Marc asks the identity of the intruder, setting off a fantastic spiel that is easily deciphered: the fool was born of a whale on the high sea and Tristan was in fact born during a dramatic crossing."⁹ Despite the purposeful exaggerated hyperbole, the sea is the primary identifier of the disguised hero. Further, speaking of the Middle High German version, Gottfried's *Tristan und Isolde*, Molly Robinson Kelly contends that:

Tristan's success at taking on other identities seems to derive from a lack of core identity ... Tristan's lack of core identity often expresses itself in spatial terms. Indeed, Tristan is characterized by a certain nomadism: from childhood he is prone to wandering, to drifting in boats without direction, and to moving frequently from place to place ... Tristan seems to have no spatial "home base" with which he is identified ... A powerful symbol of Tristan's interstitial position is the sea. Tristan's constant return to the sea underscores the unstable fluidity of his belonging, both to people and to place.¹⁰

This lack of a landed, spatial home, tangible, living parents, and hence any concrete identity accounts for his roaming nature, his gravitational pull to the sea and perhaps his final surrender to death when his identity as Iseut / Isolde's lover is thwarted. It also accounts for his easy use of pseudonyms such as "Tramtris" since giving up his current identity, to which he is not bonded, is painless and emotionally trouble-free. Further, it explains his easy use of disguise and deceit.

When the fifteen-year-old orphan now using the pseudonym "Tramtris" repeatedly beats a Norwegian captain at chess aboard his ship, the mariner treacherously sails his young victor out to sea:

⁹ Jean-Charles Payen, "The Glass Palace in the *Folie d'Oxford*: From Metaphorical to Literal Madness, or the Dream of the Dessert Island at the Moment of Exile—Notes on the Exotic Dimension of the Tristans," *Tristan and Isolde: A Casebook*, ed. Joan Tasker Grimbert. Arthurian Characters and Themes (1995; New York and London: Routledge, 2002), 111–23; here 113. See also the contribution to this volume by Christopher R. Clason.

¹⁰ Robinson Kelly, *The Hero's Place* (see note 4), 8, 206.

As þai best sat and pleyd,
 Out of hauen [port] þai rade.
 Opon the se so gray
 Fram the brimes brade [broad waves]
 Gan flete.
 Of lod that were wel glade
 And Tristrem sore wepe. (346–52)¹¹

Molly Robinson Kelly finds that in the German legend, “From the beginning, Tristan’s sense of identity is exceedingly malleable. This elasticity is echoed in the weakness of his ties to his place of origins (in the first step of his progressive exile, Tristan is so absorbed in his chess game that he is abducted in a boat without noticing it and, once lost, makes no attempt to find his way home).”¹² Thus begins Tristrem’s journey from youth to lover to death as he produces his own watery tears to mark his anxiety. Before long, the mariner tells his sailors

... “Yond is the land,
 And here shalتوу to bare. [go into the waves]
 Chese on aither hand
 Whether the lever ware [whether you rather would]
 Sink or stille stand;
 The child schal with ous fare
 On flod.”
 Tristrem wepe ful sare. (355–62)

The intimidation of the mariner sets the waters of the sea as a dangerous force to be avoided. The expectation of danger is fulfilled, for weeks later when a storm arises, the sailors fear Tristrem was the cause; the waves were so tumultuous that they knew not how to navigate.

Nyen woukes [Nine weeks] and mare
 þe mariners flet on flod,
 Til anker hem brast and are [they broke anchor]
 And stormes hem bistode; ...
 þai nisten hou to fare,

¹¹ *Lancelot of the Laik and Sir Tristrem The Comic Text: Patterns and Images in the Old French Fabliaux*, ed. Alan Lupack. TEAMS Middle English Text Series (Kalamazoo, MI: Western Michigan University, 1994). All subsequent quotations of *Sir Tristrem* will be taken from this edition. See also *Sir Tristrem*, ed. George P. McNeill. The Scottish Text Society (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1886).

¹² Robinson Kelly, *The Hero’s Place* (see note 4), 209.

þe wawes were so wode [wild]
Wiþ winde. (364–67; 370–72)

Having survived those waters, notably without comment by the characters, Tristrem is abandoned in an unknown land, as the mariners free themselves from what they think is his dangerous influence. Far from his foster-father Rohand, his real his uncle, King Mark of England, discovers and receives him hospitably where he lives peaceably for a while. But eventually the harried, travel-worried foster-father Rohand searches him out and joyfully reunites with his foster son. Rohand's first pleasure, it might be noted, is a warm healing bath to ease the travails of his journey. As the servants prepare the meal, "Water thai asked swithe" (705), with cloth and board, meat and drink "To serve Tristrem swithe / And Sir Rohand, ful fayn" (709–10). Not only does water serve in the larger context of space and place, but it also functions at the personal level for individual comfort and expression. Nevertheless, it is taken for granted without mention. When Mark discovers that Tristrem is his nephew, for example, "his wonges [cheeks] were wete" (732) but he does not speak of his tears or emotion at his discovery.

Anthony H. Harrison finds this theme of being isolated at sea in the nineteenth-century poetic version of Tristrem's adventures written by Algernon C. Swinburne (1837–1909). Here, after a sanguine and energetic battle with Mark's nobleman, Tristrem is backed into a pinnacle above the sea where, as he prepares to dive, his pugilistic excitement culminates in a Hopkinsian intuition of bird's love of his element:

And as the sea-gull hovers high, and turns
With eyes wherein the keen heart glittering years
Down toward the sweet green sea whereon the broad noon burns,
And suddenly, soul stricken with delight,
Drops, and the glad wave gladdens, and the light
Sees wing and wave confuse their fluttering white,
So Tristram one brief breathing-space apart
Hung, and gazed down.¹³

Swinburne captures the spirit of the original in his feeling for the sea, the birds, the light, and Nature in general. Harrison explains that Swinburne's

¹³ *The Poems of Algernon Swinburne*, 6 vol. (London: Chatto & Windus, 1904), vol. IV, 71; see Anthony H. Harrison, "Swinburne's *Tristram of Lyonesse*: Visionary and Courtly Epic," *Tristan and Isolde: A Casebook*, ed. Joan Tasker Grimbert. Arthurian Characters and Themes (1995; New York and London: Routledge, 2002), 301–24; here 309.

emphasis on Tristram's heroism in the poem is reinforced not only by his chivalric accomplishments, but also by such descriptions as this one, which demonstrates his harmony with the passionately receptive spirits of natural objects. His epic stature is further defined by his explicit association with other epic heroes. Thus, in canto 8, "The Last Pilgrimage," Tristram on the morning of his last battle is about to consummate his communion with nature by once again plunging into the scintillating sea. He stands at the edge,

Naked, godlike of his mould was he
 Whose swift foot's round shook all the towers of Troy;
 So clothed with might, so girt upon with joy
 As, ere a knife had shorn to find a fire
 His glorious hair before the unkindled pyre
 Whereon the half of his great heart was laid,
 Stood, in the light of his live limbs arrayed,
 Child of heroic earth and heavenly sea,
 The flower of all men: scarce less bright than he,
 If any of all men, latter-born might stand,
 Stood Tristram, silent, on the glimmering strand. (IV, 127)¹⁴

The same impetus that fueled Swinburne's *Tristram*, standing on the beach, likewise motivate the Middle English *Sir Tristrem*.

Thus, two years later, Tristrem again takes to the dangerous English waters to protest the tribute demanded by the Irish King and defended by Moraunt, in this version the brother of Princess Ysonde. Once again, men cry over the Irish demand for ransom, both gold and three hundred English children:

Schipmen him gon bring
 To Ingland ful yare...
 Mani man wepen sare
 For ransoun to Yrland. (929–30; 934–35)

Water is thus simultaneously a perilous manifestation of external space and symbol of internal conflict, but left unstated and seen as normal. Once in Ireland, Tristrem and Moraunt arrange their confrontation on an island, surrounded by the treacherous sea where Tristrem realizes only one of them will sail back to the mainland:

Thai seylden [sailed] into the wide [open sea]
 With her schippes tuo.
 Moraunt bond [tied up] his biside
 And Tristrem lete his go.

¹⁴ Harrison, "Swinburne's Tristram" (see note 13), 310.

Moraunt seyd that tide,
 “Tristrem, why dostow so?”
 “Our on schal here abide [Only one of us will survive],
 No be thou never so thro [valiant]
 Ywis.
 Whether out to live go [Whichever of us stays alive],
 He hath anough of this.” (1013–23)

After a contentious battle on the island, Tristrem cleaves Moraunt’s brain, thus claiming victory, but leaves a tell-tale fragment of his sword in the victim’s skull. This will come back to haunt him. Unfortunately here, water, unguent, and potions prove ineffective: Tristrem “is wounded ful sare. / Leches with salve and drink [that] / Hym cometh wide whare [from far and wide] (1113–15), this time fail to cure the ailing knight.

Nonetheless, after three years of sickness, the wounded and depressed Tristrem begs a ship from King Mark; he again goes out to sea from Carlioun, in water which proves to be a reprieve from his agony, a source of escape from his boredom, and the means of his cure. For “Nyen woukes [Nine weeks] and mare / He hobbed up and doun” [bobbed up and down in his boat] (1160–61). Then, when he arrives in Dublin, local shipmen rescue the wounded man, and bring him ashore, away from the driving wind. Here

To the Quen tho [then] seyd thay,
 Morauntes soster the fre,
 Ywounded swich a man lay
 That sorwe it was to se
 And care [sadness]. (1193–97)

The Queen, unaware of his identity but “mest couthe (most knowledgeable) of medicine ... brought him of his pine [pain]... [and] sent him a plaster kene” (1204, 1206, 1209). The next day, “His bon brast (broke) under skinne” (1237) so “A bath thai made him sket [quickly] / So lithe” [comforting] (1240–41). Once again, water alleviates pain. Further, watery “Salves hathe he soft / And drinkes that er lithe” (1244–45) heal him immediately thanks to the aid of the Queen. Between the warm bath, salves containing water, and refreshing drinks of water, she achieves a healthy cure he could in no wise accomplish any other way. Yet these services remain unacknowledged. For one year, he remains in Ireland, content with his healthy state—“hole he was and fere” [hale and healthy] (1280).

Enter the lovely princess Ysonde, for whom the supposed trader “Tramtris” now becomes her tutor. Eventually Tristrem, overcome with boredom, returns to England and his uncle King Mark. However, hearing of the brilliance and beauty of the young princess, Mark enlists Tramtris to return to Ireland to fetch her to be

his Queen. The sea, the usual mode of connection between England and Ireland, again becomes Tramtris's path, "And fareth over the flod" (1304) now to retrieve the Lady. As Robinson Kelly concludes of the German legend:

... The sea seems to have a design. At times the sea acts advantageously, as when a storm blows up and forces the Norwegian merchants to release Tristan, or when the waves bring him to Cornwall; at other times, it opposes the lovers' will, bringing them too swiftly back to an awaiting Mark or impending Iseut from reaching Tristan.¹⁵

To complicate matters, after Tramtris arrives at Ireland, he finds the community frightened by a dragon:

Out of Develin [Dublin] toun
 The folk wel fast ran
 In a water to droun,
 So ferd were thai than.
 For doute of o dragoun
 Thai seyd to schip thai wan (were going)
 To haven that were boun (bound). (1409–15)

Water appears as their method of escape when the dragon threatens the Dubliners; but the sea is unsafe, for citizens rush to ships which apparently become overloaded and threaten drowning. When Tramtris saves the community by slaying the bothersome dragon, he is awarded the bel Ysonde for his own. Of course he realizes she belongs to King Mark, but the gift to him of the Princess confuses his loyalties. When the Queen mother of Ysonde would heal his wounds from the dragon's battle, once again he is given a bath and another potent libation:

The Quen, for sothe to say,
 To a bath gan him lede
 Fur gayn [directly],
 And seththen [then] hirself sche yede [went]
 After a drink of main [potent drink]. 1558–62)

After Ysonde becomes suspicious of Tristrem, his defective sword reveals his identity: its missing piece is found in the skull of the Queen's brother Moraunt whom Tristrem has killed. Lying in a warm bath is generally a relaxing and even healing experience, but here Tramtris is vulnerable, for Ysonde and the Queen would kill him with a sword in retribution for her uncle: "In bath thai hadden [would have]

15 Robinson Kelly, *The Hero's Place* (see note 4), 225–26.

him slain" (1594). However, Ysonde soon learns Tristrem and Moraunt fought a fair battle, that Tramtris was her prior tutor Tristrem, and was inviting her to be King Mark's Queen. Soon she retracts her vengeance and agrees to Mark's proposal.

The next confusion arises when Ysonde's Queen Mother secretly prepares a strong love potion for her daughter and King Mark to consume on their wedding night:

Her moder about was blithe
 And tok a drink of might
 That love wald kithe (induce)
 And tok it Brengwain the bright (the maid)
 To think,
 "At er spousing anight
 Gif Mark and hir to drink." (1644–50)

Perhaps this leads to one of the most dangerous effects of water and drugs:

Ysonde, bright of hewe
 Is fer out in the se [and] ...
 Asked Bringwain a drink. (1651–52, 1661)

Far out at sea on a two-week water-voyage, the two young people are brought together in a small, confined space; when Ysonde innocently seeks a drink upon this ship to England, she is unknowingly given a golden cup containing that very potion, which she shares with Tristrem. This is the beginning of the couple's union when together they drink the magic potion intended for Ysonde and King Mark. "Her love might no man tuin (separate) / Til her (their) ending day" (1671–72). The narrator comments

In ivel time, to sain (say)
 The drink was ywrought (prepared).
 Tristrem in schip lay
 With Ysonde ich night. (1682–85)

Peggy McCracken notes that

the love potion begins to wane in Béroul's version of the *Tristan* story. Iseult's regrets for her life at court thus correspond to the waning intensity of the drug that induced their passion. But Iseult's lament does not indicate a desire to abandon Tristan, despite the fading effect of the love philtre, and although the lovers' subsequent agreement with Marc for Iseult's return to court includes the provision that Tristan will leave the country, Iseult asks him to stay near her in hiding until he is sure that Marc will not mistrust her ... In Thomas's version

of the story, the waning effect of the potion does not motivate the lovers' decision to leave the forest, and in the *Prose Tristan* once the lovers drink the potion it disappears from the story.”¹⁶

Again speaking of the German versions, Robinson Kelly contends that “Their spatial location on the sea between Ireland and Cornwall reflects perfectly Iseut’s suspended position between the belonging she had left behind and the one that lies ahead ... (the episode’s location at sea ... although totally new for Iseut, represents Tristan’s ‘home’).”¹⁷ Yet again, the characters make comments about the sea, without mentioning this potion or the momentous effect it has upon them.

Once in England, water is also the means for the lovers to communicate, through the runes Tristrem crafted for Ysonde which he floated in the waters passing through her garden. These small slips of linden-wood contained a message arranging a time and place for their tryst.

Bi water he sent adoun
 Light linden spon
 He wrot hem al with roun;
 Ysonde hem knewe wel sone.
 Bi that Tristrem was boun [ready]
 Ysonde wis his bone [request]
 To abide [await him]. (2038–44)

This communication satisfies her love, and confirms its continuance: it arranges a meeting at which both Tristrem and Ysonde realize Mark is a hidden witness, and thus act out a safe scenario to free them from suspicion. Ysonde even claims truthfully that “Y loved never man with mode [passionately] / Bot him that hadde mi maidenhede” (2133–34). Their watery communication allows them three years in which they are free to satisfy their love, but no word of their joy or the mode of achieving it is offered. When doubt again assails the couple’s innocence, the River Thames helps convince Mark otherwise. As Mark takes his Queen to London to be purged by an ordeal of fire, Tristrem, disguised as a pilgrim in beggarly clothing, offers to carry Ysonde across the Thames to her barge. In the process he stumbles and falls, causing him to hold her tightly. Thus at her purification, Ysonde can

¹⁶ Peggy McCracken, *The Romance of Adultery: Queenship and Sexual Transgression in Old French Literature*. The Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998), 113. See also the contribution to this volume by Christopher R. Clason, dealing with Gottfried von Straßburg’s *Tristan* and especially the love potion, among other liquids.

¹⁷ Robinson Kelly, *The Hero’s Place* (see note 4), 225.

again truthfully yet deceptively swear no man but Mark has come so near her as the beggar who bore her to that barge.

Over Temes sche schuld ride,
That is an arm of the se.
“To the schip side
This man schal bere me.” (2245–48)

She suggests that because of Tristrem, the beggar’s fall, and seeming lasciviousness in bearing her to the barge, the knights

In water thai wald him sink
And wers, yif thai may.
“Ye quite [repay] him ivel his swink. [for his work]”
The Quene seyd to hem ay.
“It semeth mete no drink
Hadde he nought mani a day.
For poverté, methenk
He fel, for sothe to say.” (2256–63)

Of course it is literally true that the man “bot on to schip me bare ... So neighe [near] com never man / Bot mi lord, the King” (2271, 2276–77). Once again, the couple use the river’s vagaries to protect their innocence and temporarily avoid further scrutiny, all without emotional comment or affect.

This victory of the lovers’ deceit leads Mark to cherish Ysonde, leaving Tristrem frustrated enough to retreat to Wales. Here his prowess overcomes the giant Urgan who continually tries to defeat King Triamour of Wales. When the giant falls precipitously over a bridge into the water, Tristrem is saved by the sea. That knight is rewarded with the much-prized tri-colored dog Peticrewe which he promptly sends to Queen Ysonde. This move prompts Mark to recall him, and Ysonde publically to respond to his affection until Mark vengefully exiles the two from his sight. He drives them into the woods where they dwell in a cave, lacking food and liquids such as wines and ale. Again, water saves them—in the form of a white gravel well. One day Mark’s hunting expedition brings him near to witness their behavior where, while sleeping, “The sword lay hem bituene” (2536).

The drawn sword laying between them convinces the King of their blamelessness. The nobles are not so naive, and so when the dwarf spies the amorous couple, Tristrem flees to avoid confrontation, further accusation, and his future devastation. His desperation motivates wild battles, fighting “As man that wald be slain” (2624). Over the years, then, the couple is separated by water, which ultimately elicits their demise. E. Jane Burns points out that in Béroul’s *Le Roman de Tristan*, “Mark is foiled because Isolt sees his reflection in the stream ... It is the

lovers who are shown to be masters of both sight and speech in a literary sense for they perceive the king's deceit while he remains oblivious to theirs.”¹⁸ Returning to Britain, Tristrem fights for the Duke, winning back all the Duke had previously lost, and is presented his daughter Ysonde of the White Hands. When Tristrem writes a love song for the Irish Ysonde, the British Ysonde of the White Hands misinterprets it as being for her. Soon her father offers his daughter to Tristrem, and although he accepts, he never becomes intimate with her.

In the lands Tristrem receives from the Duke for his wedding, Tristrem encounters yet another giant named Beliagog the Bold at the boundary markers where “the water was blac and brade” [dark] (2744). This sign of imminent danger Tristrem ignores. He overcomes that giant who then builds a hall near “a ford ther it was yare [where it was ready for use] / Ther he might wele ride / When his wille ware” [he wanted] (2818–20). So the threatening waters become useful when constrained in a ford. Soon the second Ysonde’s chaste condition is revealed by water as well, for when Ganhardin notices his sister Ysonde laugh, he inquires why. She responds:

Mine hors the water up brought
 Of o polk in the way. [From a puddle in the road]
 So height it fleigh, me thought, [so high it splashed]
 That in my sadel it lay.
 Ther never man no sought [reached]
 So neighe, for sothe to say [so near]. (2885–90)

The angry brother Ganhardin confronts Tristrem about why his sister, Tristrem’s wife, remains virginal. Tristrem confesses he loves another who “Is fairer than swiche thre” (2923) and Ganhardin demands to see her. Once again, Tristrem crosses the sea with him without comment or complaint, reveals his love the first Ysoude, and engages in battle with the Constable Canados who is infatuated with her. Although Tristrem is successful, he receives an arrow to an old wound; all the salves and unguents fail to restore his health.

His wounde brast aplight,
 And blake was the bane (bone);
 Non help may that knight,
 The sothe for to sayne,
 Bidene,

¹⁸ E. Jane Burns, “How Lovers Lie Together,” *A Casebook*, ed. Joan Tasker Grimbert. Arthurian Characters and Themes (1995; New York and London: Routledge, 2002), 75–93; here 85.

Save Ysonde the bright,
Of Cornwal was quene. (3360–66)

Now Tristrem lies wounded, on the brink of death. His messenger brings a message to Ysonde of Cornwall enlisting her medical assistance at his bedside. If the ship carries her, he asks a white sail to be hoisted, but “Gif Ysonde me forsake, / The blake schalt thou bende” [fly] (3387–88). When the ship arrives at the coast bearing Ysonde of Cornwall to cure her lover, the vengeful, jealous Ysonde of the White Hands of England falsely reports the sail to be black, ensuring Tristrem’s death. Tristrem

Trewd [believed] Ysonde untrue,
His kind hert it brake,
And sindrid (split) in tuo;
Above,
Cristes merci him take!
He dyed for true love. (3460–65)

Tears of old and young, low and highborn, accompanied his death. Soon thereafter, Ysonde of Ireland meets her sorrowful end: “On Tristremes bere, / Doun con sche lye; / Rise ogayn did sche nere” (303–05). Although the omnipresent water was originally the beneficent force that brought this unlucky couple together, throughout their lives it remained ambiguous, and was ultimately the culminating force in bringing the relationship, and their lives, to a sorrowful conclusion. As in the story of Romeo and Juliette, Ysonde determines to die with him when she learns the fate of her beloved. Had water not separated the lovers, and had stormy weather not held up her ship, and a vengeful wife prevented their reunion, this catastrophe would not have occurred. And yet no one seems to acknowledge the force or importance of the waters except as backdrop for the story.

In addition, clearly, the structure of the *Tristan* story is based on the sea. As Robinson Kelly avers,

The transition between spatial frameworks occurs each time with a sea voyage: Blanche-fleur’s sailing from Cornwall to Parmenie with her unborn son, Tristan; Tristan’s accidental voyage from Parmenie to Cornwall; Tristan’s journey from Cornwall to Ireland. [Furthermore] ... Instead of portraying place as a consistent, underlying *presence* that exerts powerful influence over the protagonist and his story, the various poets of the *Tristan* story problematize place’s *absence*. They tell us what happens when the anchoring ties of place are missing, or at least severely deficient.”¹⁹

¹⁹ Robinson Kelly, *The Hero’s Place* (see note 4), 181–82, 183.

Again, this aspect of the stories, highlighting the absence of landed place and the significant prevalence of the sea, are not acknowledged or credited for their value in shaping these tales, nor are they considered unusual. Donald L. Hoffman claims: “Although each version of the prose *Tristan* is a unique text, it may be difficult to define precisely the ways in which different versions of the same narrative may convey divergent meanings.”²⁰ The same may be true of poetic versions, but the overriding aquatic setting incontrovertibly inscribes them all. As Robert L. Surles points out, “[s]uch was the popularity of this legend that lyricists found that a mere reference to it brought to their audiences a wealth of ‘common ground’,”²¹ among which can be included the utility of various liquids, from water to ointment to human blood.

Water, however, functions in various, even contrapuntal ways, as the means for salvation, and the means of death and desolation in Middle English romance. As often as it brings health and consolation, both physical and spiritual, to the lovers, it is also the means for their destruction. Despite the significance of water, ointments, and blood, both magical and real, romance writers consistently downplay their import and their affect. As Finlayson emphasizes: “The lack of textual exploitation of the marvelous in most romances is thus both a product of differences in conceptions of reality and of expectations of response between modern readers and medieval readers and writers.”²² Despite modern and medieval presumptions, water and other hermeneutic liquids such as ointments and blood remain a cornerstone of many medieval romances, underpinning their very richness of interpretation.

20 Donald L. Hoffman, “*Radix Amoris: The Tavola Ritonda and Its Response to Dante’s Paolo and Francesca*,” *Tristan and Isolde: A Casebook*, ed. Joan Tasker Grimbert (1995; New York: Routledge, 2002), 207–22; here 207.

21 Robert L. Surles, “Mark of Cornwall: Noble, Ignoble, Ignored,” *Arthurian Interpretations* 3.2 (1989): 60–75; here 66.

22 Finlayson, “The Marvelous” (see note 2), 405.

Anne Scott

Lodestone and Litmus Test: Aqueous Presentations of Emotional Experience in Medieval and Renaissance Literature

Introduction

In a 2009 publication,¹ I examined four medieval stories to understand the way in which references to water enhance their literary and thematic design. Drawing from this work and expanding on it, this current study discusses the wide-ranging references to water in a larger number of secular and religious works spanning the Middle Ages and Renaissance in order to pinpoint and interpret the manner in which water imagery contributes to the authors' representation and evocation of human emotion.

I say 'human' emotion not to beg the question of whether our fellow non-human creatures experience emotion, but rather to underscore how these authors try to define the very humanity of their protagonists, as well as their readers, through this linking of emotion to a person's literal or metaphorical experiences with water. This humanity consists not only of one's expression of these emotions but of the relational situations and challenges that give rise to these emotions and as well as behavior associated with them. At the same time, and through these distinct water references, the authors also encourage the readers to register the emotional poignancy of the protagonists' struggles so that they might better understand how individuals in the general case both succeed and fail to be good people in this world.

The linking of emotional description and evocation with moral agency, and with appropriate courses of relational action, is certainly not a foreign concept within the literature of the Middle Ages and Renaissance. Dante, in the *Inferno*, unambiguously asserts the pitfalls of succumbing to excessive ardor through his account of Paolo's and Francesca's affair in Canto V of this allegory. The lustful

¹ "Come Hell or High Water: Aqueous Moments in Medieval Epic, Romance, Allegory, and Fabliau," *The Nature and Function of Water, Baths, Bathing, and Hygiene from Antiquity through the Renaissance*, ed. Cynthia Kosso and Anne Scott. *Technology and Change in History*, 2 (Boston, MA, and Leiden: Brill, 2009), 407–26.

desire (and the consummation of that lust) which the lovers experience after reading the tale of Lancelot leaves them, in the second circle of Hell, forever joined but fruitlessly buffeted by a relentless storm, the fitting punishment for their emotional excesses.² Dante's own unwise probing of Francesca's emotional state³ and his sudden fainting after he receives the answer to his question⁴ suggest the moral danger to which Dante himself also might succumb for having indulged in his pity for the lovers.

The anonymous poem *Cleanness* of the late fourteenth century also pulls the reader into a scene of rich sensory and emotional detail involving Belshazzar's wanton revelry⁵ such that we, too, might experience, along with Nebuchadnezzar's wayward son, the dangers of succumbing to self-serving pleasure-seeking and mirth at the expense of revering God. In addition, Sarah Coodin's analysis of Shakespeare's *King Lear* asserts that Shakespeare's plays, especially his tragedies, trigger valid emotional responses from readers through psychologically-detailed scenes that provoke the readers' "moral spectatorship"⁶ as they try to make sense of the human condition, especially a person's "fragility of goodness." I have appropriated this last phrase from the title of Martha Nussbaum's fascinat-

² Dante Alighieri, "Canto V," *The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri: Inferno*, trans. Allen Mandelbaum (Berkeley, Los Angeles, CA, and London: University of California Press, 1980), 38–45; here 44–45 (ll. 133–38): "Quando leggemmo il disiato riso / esser baciato da cotanto amante, / questi, che mai da me non fia diviso, / la bocca mi baciò tutto tremante. / ... / quel giorno più non vi leggemmo avante" ("When we had read how the desired smile/ was kissed by one who was so true a lover, / this one, who never shall be parted from me, / while all his body trembled, kissed my mouth / ... / that day we read no more"; trans. Mandelbaum).

³ "Canto V" (see note 2), 44–45, ll. 118–21: "Ma dimmi: al tempo d'i dolci sospiri, / a che e come concedette amore / che conosceste i dubbiosi disiri?" ("But tell me, in the time of gentle sighs, / with what and in what way did Love allow you / to recognize your still uncertain longings?" trans. Mandelbaum [see note 2]).

⁴ "Canto V" (see note 2), 44, ll. 139–42.

⁵ *Cleanness*, quoted from *Pearl, Cleanness, Patience, Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, ed. Arthur Clare Cawley and John Julian Anderson (New York and London: Dutton, 1976), 117, ll. 1508–16: "'Wassayl' he cryes. / Swyfte swaynes ful swythe swepen thertylle, / Kyppe kowpes in hond kynges to serve; ... / There was rynging on right of ryche metalles ... / [and] Clatering of covacles that kesten tho burdes / As sonet out of sauteray songe als myry" ("'Wassail', he cries. Nimble servants quickly rush to it, grasp cups to serve the kings... There was ringing indeed of rich metals when men in that splendid company ran to seize it; the clattering of the lids that the women threw away rang out as merrily as music from a psaltery"; trans. Cawley and Anderson).

⁶ Sara Coodin, "Fiction, Emotion, and Moral Agency," *Shakespeare Studies* 40 (2012): 63–69; here 63. Coodin also underscores the validity of a reader's entertaining genuine emotional responses to fictional creations (66).

ing study of Greek tragedy,⁷ in which she asserts that only through registering and working through one's emotional connections with others does one come to terms with one's humanity and moral orientation toward the world – an argument that clearly applies to the medieval and Renaissance works studied in this essay, as well.

The current study, therefore, fathoms the depths of emotion depicted by, and evoked through, the deliberate association in several texts of human behavior with references to water so that we might better understand the connection between emotion, moral agency, and relationships. I would like for us to understand how specific aqueous encounters in these works, which are emotionally charged both for their protagonists as well as for readers, become the *sine qua non* of the human condition for so many of these protagonists and speakers, providing depth, shape, and meaning to human pain, courage, love, loss, shame, madness, despair, spiritual ecstasy, and hope, within key situations that throw into relief the characters' moral and relational strengths or weaknesses.

Water, Heroism, and Spiritual Fortitude

The Old-English epic *Beowulf* is replete with references to water and water imagery, taking place, as it does, in the lands and seas of Northern Europe. The poem's specialized vocabulary involving water betrays the poet's familiarity with those northern seas and lands.⁸ The poet also makes use of a fair number of words connoting fear, terror, and horror. Ironically, however, with only a few exceptions,⁹ these references to fear are rarely, if ever, shown as something that the characters in this story experience as a genuine feeling. Instead, references to fear seem to inhere in the materiality of the poem itself, in things and situations or spectacles, but they are rarely said by the narrator or through the characters' own words to be experienced by those who might actually be afraid. For example,

⁷ Martha Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness: Luck and Ethics in Greek Tragedy and Philosophy* (New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

⁸ See "Come Hell or High Water" (see note 1), 408–13, for a detailed study of the poem's water imagery.

⁹ If fear is mentioned as an emotion experienced by a person, then it is mentioned as something one avoids: Hrothgar, for example, describes Heremod's rise and fall, and Heremod's replacement by another earl who "egesan ne gýmeð" (does not fear; l. 1757). See also *Fear and its Representations in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, ed. Anne Scott and Cynthia Kosso. *Arizona Studies in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, 6 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2002).

the people are not terrified of the father of Óhthere; instead, Óhthere is “eald ond egesfull” (old and terrible).¹⁰ After the slave steals the Dragon’s gold cup, the people do not fear the dragon; instead, after the dragon commences his fiery wrath, then this initial display of the dragon’s fury – this spectacle – becomes fearful for the people: “ac mid baële fôr, / fýre gefýsed. Wæs se fruma egeslic / lêodum on lande” (but with the bale-fire infused with flame, then was this a terrifying beginning for the people on land).¹¹ Finally, Beowulf is not explicitly shown to be terrified of the dragon while they fight; rather, Beowulf does battle with a “grygregist” or terror-stranger.¹² Indeed, experiencing fear becomes a pernicious thing that inhabits a person: when Beowulf finally fights the dragon, “ægh-wæðrum wæs / bealo hycendra brôga fram ððrum” (there was, in each hostile one, a terror of the other).¹³

It is no surprise, therefore, that when we examine the poem’s infamous “mere,” the thanes do not stand there, shaking in their boots in terror of the place, but rather “nîðwundor sêon / fýr on flôde” (see a horrible wonder, fire on flood).¹⁴ However, this technique of “showing” the reader a terrifying spectacle taking place on and within the water, rather than “telling” us directly about the emotional states of the characters who witness it, has the effect of inviting the reader into the depths of that frightening emotional experience *qua* mere such that both the thanes and readers may register, on that emotional level alone, what an unholy, ungodly place the mere truly is. We come to understand, through imagining this dark, watery environment on this emotional level, that it really is a repository of all that is uncivilized,¹⁵ wicked, and immoral, thanks to the sinful creature who inhabits it (“frêcne stôwe, ða  r þ   findan miht / sinnigne secg” [that terrible place where you might find this much-sinning creature]).¹⁶

The imaginative lure of ancient epics as well as heroic conflicts of old has also captured the attention of many film directors who have breathed cinematic life into the likes of the *Iliad*, *The Song of Roland*, and even the *Persian Wars*.¹⁷ It is not

¹⁰ *Beowulf and the Fight at Finnsburg*, ed. Francis Klaeber, 3rd ed. (1922; Lexington, MA: D. C. Heath, 1950), 110, l. 2929. All translations are my own, unless otherwise specified.

¹¹ *Beowulf* (see note 10), 87, ll. 2308–10.

¹² *Beowulf* (see note 10), 96, l. 2560.

¹³ *Beowulf* (see note 10), 96, ll. 2564–65.

¹⁴ *Beowulf* (see note 10), 52, ll. 1365–66.

¹⁵ See “Come Hell or High Water” (see note 1), note 12, for a discussion of the contrast between the unstable, watery element of the mere and the paved road leading to Heorot.

¹⁶ *Beowulf* (see note 10), 52, ll. 1378–79.

¹⁷ See, for example, Gerard Butler, Lena Headey, and Rodrigo Santoro, *300*, directed by Zack Snyder (Burbank, CA: Warner Brothers, 2006); Brad Pitt, Eric Bana, and Orlando Bloom, *Troy*,

surprising, then, that this description of *Beowulf*'s mere as a terrifying thing has sparked the creativity of directors who have invested their film adaptations with a great many stylistic flourishes, all in the interest of enhancing the connection between the visceral response that it triggers in viewers and the degree of humanity and morality possessed by those who dwell there, or even visit it.

Honing in on Grendel's humanness rather than monstrous otherness, director Sturla Gunnarsson in *Beowulf and Grendel* (2005)¹⁸ outfits the mere as a kind of hybrid cave-hovel-temple wherein Grendel eats, sleeps, and worships his dead father's head, enshrined on a rough-hewn altar. *Beowulf* (2007), the computer-generated version of the epic poem, in contrast, portrays the mere as a fantastically slimy, dripping, and seductive place where monsters go to die but also where heroes lose their moral compass in the interest of securing gold and power, symbolized through both Hrothgar's and Beowulf's sexual encounters with Grendel's mother who inhabits this place.¹⁹

These contemporary adaptations of the Old-English epic make clear that the mere is loaded with interrelated emotional and moral connotations accessible to audiences both ancient and modern. This watery, unstable, dark, hostile, and dangerous mere tests Beowulf's physical as well as moral strength. Throughout the epic, in fact, feats of physical and moral bravery acquire great vividness through the author's association of these things with water. Another such scene is Beowulf's earlier swimming competition with Breca. Beowulf's defensive argument with Unferth about this competition might well suggest a humiliating aspect of his youthful past. However, it is Beowulf's lengthy and successful battles with various noxious sea-beasts – angry "merefixa" and "fāh fēondscāða" (sea-fishes; hostile fiend-scather)²⁰ – during this ocean race that provide him with the self-righteous ammunition to cut Unferth down to size and to remind this gadfly of his decidedly un-heroic title as kin-slayer: "Breca naēfre gīt /æt heaðolācē nē gehwæþer incer / swā dēorlice daēd gefremede / fāgum sweordum – nō ic þæs gylpe – / þēah ðū þīnum brōðrum tō banan wurde / hēafodmaēgum" (You "never achieved so bold a deed with bright swords [I do not much boast of it] though

directed by Wolfgang Petersen (Burbank, CA: Warner Brothers, 2004); Klaus Kinski, Alain Cuny, and Dominique Sanda, *The Song of Roland*, directed by Frank Cassenti (France: FR3, 1978).

18 Gerard Butler, Stellan Skarsgård, and Ingvar Eggert Sigurðsson, *Beowulf and Grendel*, directed by Sturla Gunnarsson (Austin, TX: Truly Indie, 2005); Anthony Hopkins, Angelina Jolie, Ray Winstone, and John Malkovich, *Beowulf*, directed by Robert Zemeckis (Hollywood, CA: Paramount, 2007).

19 See "Come Hell or High Water" (see note 1), 410, for a catalogue of the mere's symbolism and functions.

20 *Beowulf* (see note 10), 21, ll. 549, 554.

you became your brothers' slayer, close kin"). Beowulf also adds another confident barb: "þæs þū in helle scealt / werhðo dreogan" (you will suffer in Hell for that).²¹ Beowulf's bold but not arrogant confidence in the water therefore fuels his moral boldness in Hrothgar's court, which has the added effect of giving voice to Unferth's resentment,²² surfacing through his cowardly silence after Beowulf has rebuked him. Beowulf, then, is a hero made from the outside in,²³ through his encounters with external forces, in this case, water, wherein – literally *wherein* – he earns the right to express his self-confidence and moral strength publicly, in Hrothgar's court.

The narrator of the Old English poem *The Seafarer*, copied into the *Exeter Book* in the tenth century, also makes a point to stress that the Seafarer, alone, chooses to seek out the cold, wet environment of the Northern seas in order to test his emotional and spiritual mettle, unlike land-dwellers who have an easier life. Despite suffering on icy seas and weathering keen loneliness as sharp as icicles, the Seafarer deliberately rejects life on land:

Mæg ic be me sylfum soðgied wrecan,
sipað secgan, hu ic geswincdagum
earfoðhwile oft prowade,
bitre breostceare gebiden hæbbe ...
Caldे geþrungeñ
wæron mine fet, forste gebunden,
caldum clomnum, þær þa ceare seofedun
hat' ymb heortan; ...
þe þa wræclastas widost lecgað.
For þon nu min hyge hweorfeð ofer hreþerlocan,
min modsefa mid mereflore
ofer hwæles ebel hweorfeð wide,
eorþan sceatas, cymeð eft to me
gifre ond grædig, gielleð anfloga,
hweteð on hwælweg hreþer unwearnum
ofer holma gelagu ...

[A song I sing of my sea-adventure, / The strain of peril, the stress of toil, / Which oft I endured in anguish of spirit / through weary hours of aching woe... / My feet were numb with the nipping cold, / Hunger sapped a sea-weary spirit, / And care weighed heavy upon

²¹ *Beowulf* (see note 10), 22–23, ll. 583–89. Translation from *Beowulf: A New Prose Translation*, ed. E. Talbot Donaldson (New York and London: Norton, 1966), 11.

²² This sullen resentment, clearly palpable to Director Robert Zemeckis, comes alive through John Malkovich's performance as Unferth in the film *Beowulf*. See note 16.

²³ "Come Hell or High Water" (see note 1), 412.

my heart... / Yet still, even now, my desire outreaches, / My spirit soars over tracts of sea, / O'er the home of the whale.²⁴

The poem is positively saturated with the imagery of water, especially cold water and ice: “merewerges mod,”²⁵ “bihongen hrimgicelum” (hung with rime-icicles), “hægl” (hail), and “iscaldne wæg” (ice-cold wave) are four such references occurring within a span of a few lines. This environment indeed must cause great pain, both physical and emotional, and yet the Seafarer seems to embrace a state of pain leading to spiritual exhilaration that can only come when a one person – all by himself and in a frigid, wet environment – can search his soul, steering his mind toward God in a kind of parallel to the monastic tradition.²⁶ As such, the Seafarer’s spiritual compass seems more finely honed than that of those land-dwellers who have not been tested in this way because they have chosen a safer, more comfortable, life on land. The Seafarer also seems to adopt a tone of moral superiority, as well, when dismissing those land-dwellers who prefer that comfort to the act of taking spiritual risks on the sea.

Icelandic sagas

Icelandic sagas, too, make use of cold and wet settings to underscore a hero’s feats of bravery, the attitudes and emotions that accompany these feats, and their connection to moral action and behavior. Jon Høytersten notes the tendency of Icelandic literature in general, both fiction and nonfiction alike, to explore the psychological dimensions of people and characters. Høytersten remarks that patterns of characterization in *Njál’s Saga* develop “the inner qualities related to cognition, emotions, and values,” and that the writer “may have used the entire spectrum of vice and virtue for psychologic characterization” in this saga.²⁷ His research also delineates several types of psychiatric illness, including overwhelming grief,

²⁴ *The Seafarer*, ed. L. L. Gordon (1960; New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1969), 33–42, ll. 4–64; “The Seafarer,” *An Anthology of Old English Poetry*, trans. Charles W. Kennedy (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1960), 19–20.

²⁵ *The Seafarer* (see note 24), 34–35, ll. 12, 17, 19. Gordon translates “merewerges mod” as a substantive adjective, “one weary of (or because of) the sea” (34).

²⁶ Michael Matto, “True Confessions: *The Seafarer* and Technologies of the *Sylf*,” *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 103.2 (2004): 156–79; here 165.

²⁷ Jon Geir Høytersten, “Personality and Deviation: A Study of the View of Humankind Represented in the Icelandic Sagas, with Particular Emphasis on ‘Njál’s Saga,’ *Nordic Journal of Psychiatry* 53.6 (1999): 471–72. This is Høytersten’s review of his own thesis.

psychosis, and the phenomenon of “going berserk” that appear in the “old laws of Iceland and Norway.”²⁸

Grettir’s Saga of the early fourteenth century becomes an excellent case in point, then, for elucidating the way in which a protagonist’s encounters with water both represent as well as fuel his emotional and psychological responses to a post-conversion world, one that cannot accept the presence of someone whose actions and behavior seem rooted in, and more appropriate to, a pre-Christian time. This saga might also point, through Grendel’s actions within water, to the Icelandic people’s own anxiety or uncertainty in coming to terms with a national identity in a state of flux.

In this saga, Grettir defines his brand of cocksure bravery through a great many means, including swimming feats, wrestling, contending with undead mound-dwellers, all-purpose scuffling, and even satiric comments about his companions. All of these give him bragging rights. However, there is one scene in particular, involving Grettir’s need to swim to the mainland from Drang Isle to fetch fire, that encapsulates Grettir’s misguided relationship with his world and all that this signifies in terms of his psychological make-up, his role as outlaw, and the state of Iceland in the era of the Settlements. Grettir inhabits Drang Isle because he has been outlawed, this status being due to his having killed a man on the mainland; this and other infractions have been fueled, in part, by Grettir’s inherent antisocial behavior and partly by behavior that is more fitting for him to display in a pre-conversion Iceland, wherein heroes would be welcomed with open arms for extravagant feats of bravery against well-defined monsters.

Drang Isle, surrounded by water, becomes Grettir’s refuge from a post-conversion mainland that cannot accept his behavior for what it is. In addition, because it is surrounded by water, this island also makes it difficult for him to become physically integrated within the law-abiding structure of that mainland life. The water surrounding Drang Isle, therefore, offers both protection for Grettir against his own tendencies to offend others on the mainland as well as a barrier against his sporadic attempts to be part of that socialized existence. The island surrounded by water symbolizes his loneliness as well: he is neither able to live a socialized life on the mainland proper, nor able to fully embrace the outlaw’s isolated life on Drang Isle, accompanied only by two other persons, a misfit named Glaum and also Grettir’s younger brother, Illugi, and because he is now afraid of the dark, thanks to Glám’s curse.

²⁸ Jon Geir Høyersten, “Manifestations of Psychiatric Illness in Texts from the Medieval and Viking Era,” *Archives of Psychiatry and Psychotherapy* 2 (2015): 57–60.

The water that surrounds Drang Isle, however, also serves the purpose of underscoring Grettir's "liminal" status, a term that Janice Hawes uses to describe the betwixt-and-between nature of Grettir's place in the Settlement period.²⁹ If Grettir is going to ingratiate himself into the socialized world, or at least make use of the accoutrements of a settled existence, thereby rejecting the label of outlaw that this post-conversion world has placed upon him, he will have to brave the unstable medium of this water around Drang Isle, fetch fire, and bring it back to Glaum and Illugi. This barren and insular place, however, represents all that is unsettled, uncouth, and even primitive about Grettir, not merely because of its barren geography and lack of refinements but because the drifter Glaum exemplifies a version of Grettir's negative traits, something that Grettir himself recognizes when this vagrant allows the fire to burn out, forcing Grettir to obtain some more.³⁰ Rejecting Glaum's pronounced laziness (and therefore his own), Grettir sets out on his adventure to secure fire for the island. When Grettir braves the icy water to fetch this fire, then, he is moving away from this unsatisfactory and primitive world to a more civilized one that has already rejected him.

The swimming exploit itself first underscores the features of Grettir that tie him to the older Icelandic world of brazen heroism and the brashness of outlawry. Grettir's confidence – "I shall not be drowned," he tells Illugi³¹ – gives him the stamina to swim up the fjord to Reykjaness, where, "feeling very cold," he disrobes, soaks in the hot springs, and falls asleep, unafraid and naked. The sensations that Grettir experiences during and after this exploit are merely physical, not emotional, befitting someone who has taken on the super-human traits of the heroes of yore, or even the traits of the monsters they fight, neither of which should betray feelings of emotional pain or discomfort.³² He is, at this moment, the hardened outlaw, confident in and accepting of the raw strength that has allowed him to swim to shore.

But Grettir is, in fact, human, and has been sensitive to slights from an early age, and therefore he is also subject to shame and humiliation. The juxtaposition of the swimming scene with the event that transpires afterwards, and Grettir's emotional response to it, not only stresses the defensive nature of Grettir's personality that has dogged him from his early years but also stresses the incompat-

²⁹ Janice Hawes, "The Monstrosity of Heroism: Grettir Ásmundarson as an Outsider," *Scandinavian Studies* 80.1 (2008): 19–50; here 21, 22.

³⁰ *Grettir's Saga*, trans. Denton Fox and Hermann Pálsson (Toronto, Buffalo, and London: University of Toronto Press, 1974), 154.

³¹ *Grettir's Saga* (see note 30).

³² See Hawes, "The Monstrosity of Heroism" (see note 29), for her exploration of the boundaries between the human and nonhuman in Grettir's behavior (30–32).

ibility of Grettir's behavior within an evolving world that does not perceive anything particularly special about his masculine valor. Although the swimming feat showcases his easy self-confidence ("He swam strongly" and the "current [was] behind him"),³³ the subsequent presentation of his naked manhood by the hot springs earns him the ridicule of a farmer's daughter and her maidservant who spy him in that vulnerable state, the latter commenting that he was less well-endowed than she would wish for. When Grettir attempts to master the moment by claiming, through vitriolic verses, that it is not every day that a "hussy / ... can get / so close a look / at a hair-girt sword,"³⁴ this defensive self-pride instead masks a dangerous inferiority about his masculinity that he acts out by raping the maidservant shortly afterwards, playing the part of the anti-hero instead.³⁵ Grettir's fetching of fire on the mainland by swimming through dangerous waters is certainly a civilizing action that could help him bridge the gap between his primitive outlaw existence and the more socialized world of the mainland. However, the sexual assault that comes on the heels of this brave action is anything but civilized.

His exploits in the water, which only lead Grettir to this sorry and shameful conclusion, come to be seen as hollow and useless, at the very least ineffective in helping Grettir reform his outlaw status and become the socialized man whose warm connections with kith and kin might well keep him from being lonely and afraid of the dark. The swim between Drang Isle and Reykaness also demonstrates that, in a way, Grettir is only comfortable in that liminal space, confident and calm in the water but unhappy and unfulfilled in either of the other polarized worlds, and unable to negotiate a place for himself in either one.

An earlier swimming trial in the cold sea also betrays the uneasy relationship that a man who possesses raw, heroic strength has with a society that increasingly rejects those displays of strength. When Grettir becomes encrusted in ice from a cold swim (and therefore is not recognizable as human) and enters a home, he fetches some fire for his shipmates, but in the process he unwittingly scares the occupants who retaliate by beating him with burning logs, causing the home and household to go up in flames.³⁶

33 *Grettir's Saga* (see note 30), 154.

34 *Grettir's Saga* (see note 30), 155.

35 "The wench has complained / that my penis is small, / and the boastful slut / may well be right. / But a small one can grow, / and I'm still a young man, / so wait until I get / into action, my lass.' The maid kept crying out, but in the end, before they parted, she had stopped taunting him" (*Grettir's Saga* [see note 30], 155).

36 *Grettir's Saga* (see note 30), 84–85.

In this instance, Grettir's bravery in the water falsely encourages him to possess a sense of heroic self-worth that is sadly, even pathetically, misplaced in an evolving, Christianized world that does not value such random feats of out-and-out physical valor. In addition, Grettir's courage, now equated with a kind of reckless arrogance that makes him appear closer to monster than human, seems only designed for survival and not heroism,³⁷ certainly not heroism in a post-conversion world, for his bravery is neither a miracle nor requested, blessed, or aided by God.

Like a pure version of Greek *hamartia*, i.e., wherein one “misses the mark” but without the heavy moral (and even Christian) connotations of this word when it is commonly translated as “tragic flaw” – his misguided act might well betray the misgivings of Icelanders themselves about their own relationship to their pre-conversion past, a past replete with the celebration of the fantastic and otherworldly and also the superhuman strength of heroes fighting decidedly unchristian monsters.³⁸ Quoting Torfi Tulinius, Margaret Ross describes these misgivings as the expression of the “uncertain identities” of Icelandic people of the High Middle Ages.”³⁹

Although devoid of Grettir's own expression of emotion – Grettir, from early on, has been described as “taciturn”⁴⁰ – this swimming event certainly gives expression to the uncertainty of a people who might want to embrace a Christian future while still clinging to the well-established literary exploits of its famous and mythical heroes: as the author plainly says, “there was never an outlaw as distinguished as Grettir the Strong.”⁴¹ The swimming scene therefore lends itself to what Eleanor Barraclough has termed, in the general case, the saga’s “literary complexity and psychological depth”⁴² not just of its titular character but of the Icelandic people, too.

³⁷ Hawes, “The Monstrosity of Heroism” (see note 29), 31.

³⁸ Hawes, “The Monstrosity of Heroism” (see note 29), 25.

³⁹ Margaret Clunies Ross, “Realism and the Fantastic in the Old Icelandic Sagas,” *Scandinavian Studies* 74.4 (2002): 443–55; here 444.

⁴⁰ *Grettir's Saga* (see note 30), 24.

⁴¹ *Grettir's Saga* (see note 30), 188.

⁴² See Eleanor Rosamund Barraclough, “Inside Outlawry in *Grettis saga Ásmundarsonar* and *Gísla saga Súrssonar*: Landscape in the Outlaw Sagas,” *Scandinavian Studies* 82.4 (2010): 365–88; here 365–68 for a discussion of this literary and psychological complexity.

Water and Christian Heroism

It is perhaps the saints' legends and stories about holy Christians that provide us with the most clear-cut examples of triumph and exaltation through encounters with water. Several martyrs and/or devout Christians all have the distinction of dying for the faith through drowning or being tortured in water for their beliefs. Early martyr Clement (d. ca. 100) is said to have died by being drowned in the sea, an anchor tied to him.⁴³ St. Florian (d. 304) was finally drowned in the "river Enns with a stone around his neck"⁴⁴ after suffering other cruel assaults through fire and flaying. The Holy Martyr Leonidis and the seven Corinthian virgins Charissa, Nike, Galina, Kalisa, Nunekhia, Basilissa, and Theodora (d. 258) all drowned with stones tied around their necks after the first drowning attempt failed (after this first attempt, they had been found by their persecutors walking on the water and singing hymns).⁴⁵ And finally, Gabriel de Santa Magdalena, titled the "saintly doctor of Nagasaki"⁴⁶ of the seventeenth century was tortured in hot water. But whereas the martyrs' flesh eventually weakens, their holy spirits nevertheless triumph, and drowning itself becomes an extension of the martyrs' great hope and confidence in being exalted in God's eyes.

One mystical writing, the anonymous *Cloud of Unknowing*⁴⁷ of the latter half of the fourteenth century, transforms this expression of hope into a spiritual yearning to feel God's presence through losing oneself in a seemingly impenetrable cloud of darkness. This "darkness" and "cloud," according to the author, are likened on the one hand to spiritual ignorance, which keeps the mystic from experiencing God's inexpressible and "loving sweetness" in "the clear light of ... understanding."⁴⁸ On the other hand, the author makes it abundantly clear that

⁴³ "Catholic Encyclopedia," www.newadvent.org (last accessed on Jan. 12, 2016).

⁴⁴ "Catholic Online," www.catholic.org (last accessed on Jan. 12, 2016).

⁴⁵ "St. Leonidas and the Seven Virgins, Martyrs, April 16," www.corinthianmatters.com (last accessed on Jan. 12, 2016).

⁴⁶ Claudia von Collani, "Healthcare in the Franciscan Far East Missions (17th–18th Centuries)," *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum* 107 (2014): 61–116; here 93. In 1630, Gabriel "was tortured in the hot waters of Unzen ... [and later] was burnt alive in 1632." See also Charles Connell, "From Spiritual Necessity to Instrument of Torture: Water in the Middle Ages," *The Nature and Function of Water, Baths, Bathing*, (see note 1), 463–78.

⁴⁷ Quotations are taken from *The Cloud of Unknowing*, trans. Clifton Wolters (New York and London: Penguin, 1961), or from the Middle English as quoted in Eleanor Johnson, in "Feeling Time, Will, and Words: Vernacular Devotion in the *Cloud of Unknowing*," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 41.2 (2011): 345–68; here 345, 361–62 (note 1). In this article, Johnson summarizes the stylistic and theological criticism of the poem.

⁴⁸ *The Cloud of Unknowing* (see note 47), 61–62.

this cloud of unknowing is the only medium in or through which one can feel or see God in this life: it can happen nowhere else but in this cloud. Thus, the cloud itself, especially in the mystic's act of uniting with it after the darkness of the cloud has dissipated, becomes the mystic's way of becoming one with God, the ultimate goal of the author's meditations.

Before the author can unite with this cloud, however, he must penetrate it first. This very action of penetration arises out of his untrammelled intention and focused volition to do so, married to (and motivated by) a sharp, piercing love: “sharpe darte of longing loue.”⁴⁹ However, this dense cloud, which disables both mind and memory, also aids in this process by allowing the author to feel his way to God unhindered by intellectual assumptions and expectations: God “cannot be comprehended by our intellect or any man’s.”⁵⁰

By associating the complexity of mystical experience with two well-known properties of clouds and fog to obscure vision but not hinder physical movement, the author therefore suggests through this heuristic device that the mystic's analogous spiritual movement toward feeling God's loving presence within this unique occluding environment and unhindered by the mind can be guided by a sharp, piercing longing that lights the way and dissipates spiritual darkness. In doing so, the mystic can then achieve “oneheed”⁵¹ with God. By achieving this oneness with God, the author suggests, as Walter Hilton does in his *Ladder of Perfection*, that the cloud almost obtains a paradoxical state, captured through Hilton's oxymoron “glowing darkness.”⁵²

Eleanor Johnson argues that through a carefully-crafted linguistic experience of simple, pared-down, repetitive, and monosyllabic prayer, the *Cloud*'s anonymous author, and by extension those who read his spiritual account and thereby experience his spirituality mimetically, avoid the dangerous territory that other mystics, like Richard Rolle, traverse through their use of charged words and phrases that are rich with sensory appeal and thereby might expose the mystics to the baser experiences of the body and its five senses.

However, I would also argue that by stressing how “sudden” and “without warning”⁵³ this uniting with God can be – it can happen in a “twinkling of an eye”⁵⁴ – and by choosing the medium of a dark, nebulous cloud in which to

⁴⁹ Johnson, “Feeling Time, Will, and Words” (see note 47), 345.

⁵⁰ *The Cloud of Unknowing* (see note 47), 63.

⁵¹ Johnson, “Feeling Time, Will, and Words” (see note 47), 345.

⁵² Walter Hilton, *The Ladder of Perfection*, trans. Leo Sherley-Price (London and New York: Penguin, 1957), 10–13.

⁵³ *The Cloud of Unknowing* (see note 47), 65.

⁵⁴ *The Cloud of Unknowing* (see note 47), 64.

imagine this unifying process with God, the author tames the sharply-rendered, even, at times, romantic and erotic sensory qualities of mystical experience recorded in the accounts of other mystics. First, he does not allow the mystic to dwell on the sensory experiences that may have led him to that unifying state.

Second, he takes great pains to define this “cloud” in a particular, even peculiar, way so as to diminish any sensory experience that a mystic might have within it; namely, he states explicitly that this cloud is not “the sort of cloud that you see in the sky,” the kind that can be recognized “by its appearance”⁵⁵ and, I argue, by its feeling on skin. The author seems uncomfortable with, even threatened by, the notion of clouds as formed “out of the vapours which float in the air”⁵⁶ because those very “vapours” might appeal to the tactile senses of the mystic. Negating the precise aquatic properties of this cloud but welcoming the cloud’s ability to occlude vision, the author thereby removes even those remotely sensory qualities of the cloud obtained through its moisture in order for the mystic to have this sudden experience within a purely dark environment that does not lend itself to any seductive or beguiling experiences through the five senses.

It is those very sensory experiences that Richard Rolle, Walter Hilton, and Margery Kempe⁵⁷ describe, often in great detail, in their own spiritual accounts. Unlike these mystics, the author of the *Cloud* can cut to the chase, as it were, and discuss the spiritual significance and benefits of the mystic’s experience of divine unity rather than having to spend time cautioning his readers to interpret, in a proper, moral way, any excessive sensory or bodily experiences that might well be related to mystical visions: the appropriate way to interpret these experiences is as a stepping stone toward spiritual union with God and not – as a baser end in its own right – an opportunity for sensory indulgence in and of itself.

Water and Love

Water in various states, thus far, appears to be an unstable, sometimes frightening, and yet necessary medium with and in which individuals must struggle if one

⁵⁵ *The Cloud of Unknowing* (see note 47), 66, 144.

⁵⁶ This particular translation comes from *The Cloud of Unknowing*, ed., James Walsh, S. J. (Ramsey, NJ, New York, and Toronto: Paulist Press, 1981), 127.

⁵⁷ Richard Rolle, *The Fire of Love*, trans. Clifton Wolters (London and New York: Penguin, 1995), 85–91; Walter Hilton, *The Ladder of Perfection* (see note 52), 10–13; and *The Book of Margery Kempe*, trans. Barry Windeatt (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England, and New York: Penguin, 1985), 51, 88, 123, 125.

is to better oneself physically, spiritually, morally, or psychologically, regardless of whether the struggle is in vain. Those very trials have led to portrayals of heroic confidence, shame, uncertainty, exaltation, even longing for God. A person's metaphorical association with, or response against, water can also serve to undergird the strength of loyal, romantic love, too. Love, in Shakespeare's well-known sonnet "116," will never be shaken by the vagaries of life: rather, it "is an ever-fixed mark / That looks on tempests and is never shaken; / It is the star to every wandering bark, / Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken."⁵⁸ No stormy seas in this sonnet can capsize the enduring qualities of eternal, true love.

In Sonnet "56," the sea is not stormy but rather massive and unmoving, a stable body of water that one looks across so that one might spy something better on the opposite shore. The poem describes an emotional gulf, a "sad int'rim"⁵⁹ that separates the speaker from the youth whom he loves, thanks to the youth's withdrawing his affection and directing it to other persons instead. Employing a simile, the speaker would have that gulf transformed into a body of water across which he and his lover, like two newly-weds ("two contracted new"), can gaze fondly in order to whet their desires once again:

Let this sad int'rim like the ocean be
 Which parts the shore where two contracted new
 Come daily to the banks, that, when they see
 Return of love, more blest may be the view.⁶⁰

Here, Shakespeare tries to reframe the fickle nature of the youth's love as well as assuage the emotional insecurities experienced by the speaker through the image of a stable body of water that only separates the lovers temporarily before they can enjoy the "Return of love" once again.

In a similar vein, John Donne also seems to agree that emotional vicissitudes have no place in the realm of stable, loyal, and refined love, which we can see in his "A Valediction forbidding mourning" (1611), a poem included in his "Songs and Sonets" and apparently written for his wife.⁶¹ The speaker first asks that he

⁵⁸ "Shakespeare's Sonnets," *William Shakespeare: The Complete Works*, ed. Alfred Harbage (1969; Baltimore: Penguin, 1975), 1472, ll. 5–8.

⁵⁹ "Shakespeare's Sonnets" (see note 58), 1462, l. 9.

⁶⁰ "Shakespeare's Sonnets" (see note 58), 1462, ll. 9–12.

⁶¹ See "A Valediction forbidding mourning," *The Complete English Poems: John Donne*, ed. Constantinos Apostolos Patrides (New York, London, and Toronto: Knopf, 1991, 1985), 97, headnote to footnotes.

and his beloved wife “melt, and make no noise.”⁶² The verb “melt” has several definitions appropriate for the word’s usage in this poem: (1) “to become liquefied by heat”⁶³ (perhaps through the heat of passion, enjoyed by the speaker and his wife before he must leave; this lovemaking, however, must be experienced silently so as not to alert the “layetie”⁶⁴ of their sacred love); (2) “to vanish or disappear; to depart unobtrusively”⁶⁵ (referring to the imminent departure of the speaker, a departure experienced emotionally by both his wife and himself which the speaker asks not be marred by “noise”); and (3) “to be overwhelmed with dismay or grief”⁶⁶ (overwhelming sadness at the prospect of the speaker’s departure, which the speaker, again, wants to be expressed as quietly as possible). Applied to the actions or events of love-making, departure, and grief, this melting – this manner of going very quietly from a solid to a liquid state – tempers the shrill emotional angst and pain associated with impending loss that both husband and wife, in love with each other and on the brink of a separation, might suffer.

Cautioning his wife further, lest her emotional turmoil damage the relationship, the speaker asks that she not “move”⁶⁷ any “teare-floods, nor sigh-tempests.”⁶⁸ By going about their separation in the most unobtrusive way possible, the speaker claims that he and his wife can surely endure this departure by being “inter-assured of the mind” instead.⁶⁹ Loving one another in this highly abstract and ethereal way, Donne suggests, is superior to the love enjoyed, or rather suffered, by “Dull sublunary lovers.”⁷⁰ This “sublunary” love, because of its very nature of being under the moon, on this earth, and therefore tied to the whims of our five senses, must be subjected to the power of the moon in the way that this planet tugs not just at the tides but also at the lovers’ tender feelings when they

62 “A Valediction forbidding mourning” (see note 61), 97, l. 5.

63 “Melt,” *The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary*, v¹, def. I.1.

64 “A Valediction forbidding mourning,” 97, l. 8.

65 “Melt,” v1, def. 1.e, www.OED.com.

66 “Melt,” *The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary*, v¹, def. I.3.a.

67 “Move,” “To excite, arouse, stir up,” def. II.25, www.OED.com.

68 “A Valediction forbidding mourning” (see note 61), 97, l. 6.

69 “A Valediction forbidding mourning” (see note 61), 98, l. 19.

70 “A Valediction forbidding mourning” (see note 61), 97, l. 13. Edgar Laird, in “Love ‘elemented’ in John Donne’s ‘Valediction: Forbidding Mourning’,” *ANQ: A Quarterly Journal of Short Articles, Notes and Reviews* 4.3 (1991): 120 explains that “the whole process of coming-to-be” and “passing-away” is a “strictly sublunary phenomenon controlled by the stars in a Ptolemaic universe. According to Albumasar, the sublunary world is composed of elements and things elemented,” which, in this poem, makes an “elemented” love, i.e., that which references body parts, impure.

must say good bye to the very “eyes, lips, [and] hands”⁷¹ that have fueled their imperfect, carnal love for each other.

Melting, sigh-tempests, tear-floods, and sublunary love: the poem’s rich water imagery helps us visualize a passion so great, and a departure so painful, that it could threaten to inundate the speaker and his wife. Aside from the need to maintain their love for one another through the act of being “inter-assured of the mind,” Donne also suggests that by avoiding the watery tempests of crying and sighing, they might create a more refined love that has the capacity to generate “a new world order.”⁷²

Donne also counteracts the relational instability caused by emotional storms through the conceit of the compass,⁷³ a solid and stolid mechanical instrument that, if used properly, allows one to draw perfect circles emblematic of the sacred and ideal love shared by the speaker and his wife. The compass and the circle associated with it at the end of the poem therefore offer a reassuring antidote to the excessive and destabilizing weeping and emotional tempests that have been referenced and logically dismissed (but probably not truly quelled) in the poem’s earlier lines.

Water, Uncertainty, Anxiety, Obsessiveness, and Madness

It is clear that water imagery has the capacity to sharpen feelings of anxiety, uncertainty, and even madness – feelings and emotional states that our authors make clear cannot always be mitigated by any physical strength, emotional fortitude, or even change in character. Custance, in Chaucer’s “Man of Law’s Tale,”⁷⁴ must journey not once, not twice, but three times across the “salty see”⁷⁵ as an unwilling pawn in her emperor father’s and all of Christianity’s design to tame the pagans by converting them through marriage, thereby spreading the realm and reign of Christendom. Says the narrator regarding the first of these ocean

71 “A Valediction forbidding mourning” (see note 61), 98, l. 20.

72 Sarah Pohrie, “Transposing World Harmony: Donne’s Creation Poetics in the Context of a Medieval Tradition,” *Studies in Philology* 107.2 (2010), 212–35; here 218.

73 “A Valediction forbidding mourning” (see note 61), 98, ll. 26–36.

74 All quotations are taken from “The Man of Law’s Tale,” *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Larry D. Benson (Boston, Palo Alto, CA, et al.: Houghton Mifflin, 1987), 89–104.

75 “Man of Law’s Tale” (see note 74), 103, l. 1109.

journeys, “To shippe is brought this woful faire mayde,”⁷⁶ the narrator’s passive verbal construction emphasizing just that: the passivity of Custance within this entire scenario. She then arrives after her first ocean journey to marry the Sultan, only to watch him hacked to bits by his wicked Muslim mother and her friends,⁷⁷ and then to be placed in a ship “al steerelees” or rudderless,⁷⁸ bound for Italy. But during her voyage she loses her way and winds up several years later on the shores of Northumberland, where she arrives having been “so mazed in the see” (so confused through her sea-faring) that she no longer knows who she is or what she is about.⁷⁹ The journeys that she takes on the turbulent sea give great poignancy to the unwilling, uncertain, yet fated role that Custance plays in the grander scheme of religious indoctrination.

Chaucer’s “Franklin’s Tale,”⁸⁰ as well, contains a well-wrought ocean scene that renders a lovelorn and lonely wife’s anxiety about her absent husband very palpable, and it drives home the importance of her promises to others. Aurelius, the unwanted suitor of Dorigen who has been charged playfully by Dorigen with making the rocks off the coast of Brittany disappear – an act that she believes will safeguard her husband’s return and for which Dorigen will reward Aurelius with her love – employs the help of a magician/clerk who uses conjuring tricks to manipulate the tides into causing those very rocks to disappear. When the tide-waters have finally obscured the rocks thanks to the clerk’s machinations, Aurelius, who now bows and scrapes, and hems and haws, approaches Dorigen to inform her that this task has been completed. Dorigen, thunderstruck, responds, “It is agayns the proces of nature.”⁸¹ In her sorrowful face there was not “a drope of blood.”⁸²

That the powerful but normally well-regulated tides can overflow their natural bounds and alter the immutable coastline of Brittany, thereby causing the black rocks to sink into the sea, is something that Dorigen cannot comprehend because her epistemological orientation, rooted, as it is, in the physical world she inhabits and in her sensory apprehension of it, cannot tolerate vicissitudes

⁷⁶ “Man of Law’s Tale” (see note 74), 92, l. 316.

⁷⁷ “Man of Law’s Tale” (see note 74), 93, l. 431.

⁷⁸ “Man of Law’s Tale” (see note 74), 93, l. 439.

⁷⁹ “Man of Law’s Tale” (see note 74), 94, l. 526 ff.

⁸⁰ All quotations are taken from “The Franklin’s Tale,” *The Riverside Chaucer* (see note 74), 178–89.

⁸¹ “The Franklin’s Tale” (see note 80), 85, l. 1345.

⁸² “The Franklin’s Tale” (see note 80), 85, l. 1340.

in that world, despite her wish that the rocks would truly vanish.⁸³ However, she does, at that painful moment, comprehend fearfully that her rash promise to Aurelius has actually meant something to him and that no amount of shock or disbelief on her part can erase the fact that she is now bound to love him physically and adulterously, to her great shame and angst.

This situation provokes Arveragus's own discomfiture but not disbelief when he permits her to act as her own agent in this dangerous situation that could very well threaten the integrity of their marriage.⁸⁴ The disappearance of the rocks under the tide-waters, through the magician's spells and incantations, also calls into question the deceptive power of any kind of "argumentz"⁸⁵; the dubious power of rash promises as placed above the sacrament of marriage; and the moral duty of human beings, whether knights, ladies, love-sick lovers, or magicians, to consider "the beste on every syde"⁸⁶ when making decisions for the "commune profyt"⁸⁷ of all parties concerned.

A medieval French romance written two centuries before Chaucer's "Franklin's Tale" also employs water imagery to enhance our understanding of a character's strengths and weaknesses. Like Dorigen in Chaucer's tale, Yvain, in Chrétien de Troyes's twelfth-century eponymous romance,⁸⁸ also finds himself in an intractable situation involving water that characterizes his emotional demise and that reflects back on Yvain's moral failings in chivalry and marriage.⁸⁹ It is not Yvain, however, but rather his brother-in-arms, Calogrenant, who goes "en quête

⁸³ Anne Scott, "Plans, Predictions, and Promises: Ethics, Empathy, and Epistemology in Chaucer's *Franklin's Tale*," *The Chaucer Review* 29.4 (1995): 390–416.

⁸⁴ "The Franklin's Tale" (see note 80), 187, ll. 147–85.

⁸⁵ "The Franklin's Tale" (see note 80), 180, l. 886.

⁸⁶ "The Franklin's Tale" (see note 80), 187, l. 1521.

⁸⁷ I borrow this phrase from Chaucer's "The Parliament of Fowls," *The Riverside Chaucer* (see note 74), 385, l. 47. Most people call this work a poem, not a verse narrative. Do you want me to leave the title in quotations, therefore, or italicize?

⁸⁸ All French quotations are taken from Chrétien de Troyes, *Le Chevalier au Lion* (*Yvain*), ed. Claude Buridant and Jean Trottin (Paris: Librairie Honoré Champion, 1972). All translations are mine unless taken from Chrétien de Troyes, *Yvain or The Knight with the Lion*, trans. Ruth Harwood Cline (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1984). French quotations will be cited with page numbers; translations from Cline will be cited with line numbers. See also the contribution to this volume by Jean E. Jost, dealing with the Middle English version.

⁸⁹ See "Come Hell or High Water" (see note 1), 413–17 for discussion of the fountain, or magic spring, in *Yvain*, as a literary device used to shape plot and characterization. Misty Rae Urban also explores such devices in "Magical Fountains in Middle English Romance," *The Nature and Function of Water, Baths, Bathing, and Hygiene from Antiquity through the Renaissance*, ed. Cynthia Kosso and Anne Scott. Technology and Change in History, 2 (Boston and Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2009), 427–51.

d'aventures⁹⁰ (in search of adventures) first and encounters this water, a magical spring or fountain, which is located in the forest Brocéliande. Calogrenant takes water from the spring by means of a beautiful basin that hangs suspended above a rock within the spring, which is, by itself, positioned on four rubies. Doing exactly what the giant, elephant-eared herdsman has implied he should not do,⁹¹ Calogrenant, who desires to see a spectacle,⁹² takes this spring water and pours it on the great rock below the basin, evoking a terrible and torrential thunderstorm. Although the thunderstorm's cessation and the following polyphonic singing of birds provokes great "joy," even "rapture," in Calogrenant – "tout joyeux je repris assurance"; "je ne pense pas que nul en jouisse s'il ne va écouter celle où je goûtais tant de Plaisir que je croyais être en extase." ("I felt great joy"; "For I had never, till that time, / heard such tremendous joy / .../It brought me joy and so enhanced / my rapture")⁹³ – this elation is very short-lived because the guardian of the magical spring, the Storm Knight Esclados, arrives to defend his land, unhorsing Calogrenant and leading his horse away, thereby shaming him.

This first encounter with the magic spring registers a great many of Calogrenant's emotional responses to the situation, from curiosity at needing to see the spring in action with his own two eyes, and obsessiveness through ignoring the herdsman's warning simply for the sake of adventure, to joy and wonder regarding the beauty of the calm after the storm and the singing birds, shame at the Storm Knight's harsh treatment of him,⁹⁴ humiliation at having to recite this story all over again for the sake of Queen Guinevere's request,⁹⁵ and regret at his rash behavior during his adventure: "je fis là une folie: j'y aurais renoncé volontiers, si j'avais pu" (I committed a folly and I gladly would have renounced the deed, if I could have).⁹⁶

Nor does Calogrenant save his disclosure of regret until the end of his story: he makes sure that his listening audience is well aware of his misgivings fairly early in his narrative. By taking stock of this wide array of emotions provoked in Calogrenant during his visit at the magic spring and afterward, we discern an

90 *Le Chevalier au Lion (Yvain)* (see note 88), 5.

91 *Le Chevalier au Lion (Yvain)*, 11; *Yvain or The Knight with the Lion*, ll. 365–76 (see note 88).

92 "Je décidai de voir le prodige de la tempête et de l'orage," *Le Chevalier au Lion (Yvain)*, 12. "I wished to see / the marvel: how the spring and tree / provoked the storms" (*Yvain; or the Knight with the Lion*, 12) (see note 88).

93 *Yvain or The Knight with the Lion*, ll. 422, 443–44; *Le Chevalier au Lion (Yvain)*, 12–13 (see note 88).

94 *Yvain or The Knight with the Lion*, ll. 503–04; *Le Chevalier au Lion (Yvain)*, 14 (see note 88).

95 *Yvain or The Knight with the Lion*, ll. 528–40; *Le Chevalier au Lion (Yvain)*, 14–15 (see note 88).

96 *Le Chevalier au Lion (Yvain)* (see note 88), 12. Translation mine.

important message about the ethics of knighthood: namely, “adventuring” for its own sake, i.e., for the sake of seeking thrills and emotional highs for one’s own selfish benefit, rends the relational fabric of this medieval world, which is woven together with relational rules and expectations for courtesy, respect, and propriety.

As the Storm Knight makes very clear to Calogrenant, this young knight has wreaked devastation “sans défi,” without provocation,⁹⁷ on his land. The deluge that Calogrenant has caused reflects the untutored behavior of a young knight “feeling his oats,” completely unaware of the consequences of his behavior and his social or ethical role in the world, and blind to everything except his naked desire. That Calogrenant regrets his unseemly behavior both within his narrative and at the end of it should give all of his listeners fair warning about the dangers of indulging in this kind of reckless pleasure-seeking unbecoming of a knight.

It is obvious that Yvain, who leaves Arthur’s kingdom quietly and at break of day to avenge his brother-in-arms’ humiliation, does not internalize the message in Calogrenant’s anecdote and even makes matters worse. The telescoping narrative that Chrétien uses to describe Yvain’s own encounter at the magic fountain removes all references to the wonder and joy that his brother-in-arms experienced in that same location, making Yvain’s actions during this part of his journey seem driven, cold, and calculated. Although his own adventure, unlike Calogrenant’s, now has a purpose or goal, namely to avenge Calogrenant and to do so without King Arthur’s knowledge, it seems even more driven and obsessive than Calogrenant’s seemed, given that the narrator does not choose to linger on Yvain’s positive emotional response regarding Brocéliande’s magic waters but rather conveys a lock-step quality to Yvain’s mission:

Combien qu'il doive le payer, il n'aura de ceese qu'il voie le pin ombrageant la fontaine, et le perron et la tourmente, qui déchaîne la grêle, la pluie, le tonnerre et le vent ... Puis il fit route jusqu'à la fontaine et vit tout ce qu'il voulait voir. Sans perdre en seul instant il renversa d'un coup, sur le perron, le bassin rempli d'eau. Aussitôt il venta et il plut, et la tempête se déchaîna comme prévu. Et quand Dieu rendit la sérénité, les oiseaux vinrent dans le pin et firent une fête merveilleuse audessus de la fontaine périlleuse.

[“Whatever price he’d have to pay, / he would not stop until he’d seen, / overshadowed by the evergreen, / the fountain, great stone, and the gale / with thunderbolts, wind, rain, and hail ... / He went ahead and reached the spring, which he so wished to see. The lord / did not sit down or pause; he poured / some water on the great green stone. / The storm came, just

97 *Yvain or The Knight with the Lion*, ll. 457–60; *Le Chevalier au Lion (Yvain)*, 13 (see note 88).

as he had known / it would, with gales of wind and rain./ When God gave sunshine once again, / the birds came to the pine to sing / with joy above the parlous spring.”]⁹⁸

Although the birds celebrated in grand style (“firent une fête merveilleuse”) with their singing after the storm passes, it is not Yvain himself who is joyful on his journey. Moreover, Yvain mortally wounds the Storm Knight, pursues him as if he were prey,⁹⁹ and chases him to his castle, thinking that he had wasted his efforts if he could not catch the knight and bring back proof to Arthur’s court.¹⁰⁰

If Calogrenant’s experiences at the magic waters have signified the dangers of rash behavior motivated by boundless desire, Yvain’s experiences highlight the dangers of pursuing a goal unmodified by chivalric rules and a chivalric temperament. We can forgive Calogrenant for his naiveté, perhaps. But we have a more difficult time understanding Yvain’s lapses here, given that Calogrenant’s negative example could well have provided Yvain with the social, moral, and relational tools to avoid the other knight’s mistakes. In addition, we come to understand, through Chrétien’s implied criticism of Yvain’s behavior at the fountain, that chivalry is much more than the seeking of revenge or the obtaining of “proof” of success. Those goals, in fact, are more in keeping with medieval epics, not romances.

If Calogrenant is denied any sustained experiences of joy and rapture at the magic spring due to his selfish pursuit of adventure simply for the sake of adventure; and if Yvain is too obsessed with only the rudimentary aspects of his masculine code of conduct – revenge and proof – to entertain such emotions at the spring, then it behooves us to understand what these beautiful emotions associated with the spring might mean, and how Yvain might capture those experiences. Several critics have noted that this particular spring, and that magic fountains and water generally, are associated with fertility, fecundity, rebirth, and love.¹⁰¹ Therefore, for a knight to experience elation and happiness within this environment, he must learn to revel in these very aspects of human existence that go beyond his masculine pursuits of glory, valor, and renown, and he must balance those pursuits with those associated with love, romance, and the awakening of the soul through one’s connection with a beloved. However, these pursuits are

⁹⁸ *Yvain or The Knight with the Lion*, ll. 726–31; 754–62; *Le Chevalier au Lion (Yvain)*, 20–21 (see note 88).

⁹⁹ *Yvain or The Knight with the Lion*, l. 828; *Le Chevalier au Lion (Yvain)*, 22 (see note 88).

¹⁰⁰ *Yvain or The Knight with the Lion*, ll. 840–47; *Le Chevalier au Lion (Yvain)*, 22–23 (see note 88).

¹⁰¹ See “Come Hell or High Water” (see note 1), notes 26, 28, 29, 30, and 31.

not given to just anyone to experience; rather, a knight must earn them through actions tempered by humility and self-awareness.

Yvain does not seem to arrive at this important awareness. When he comes upon the spring by accident later within the forest Brocéliande, he is reminded of the way in which he has shamefully neglected his wife Laudine, the Lady Landuc, who is queen of that very land. This time, he does not provoke a terrible storm at the fountain, and his despair, verging on madness, is quite palpable: “Hélas, peu s’en fallut que mon seigneur Yvain ne retombât dans sa folie, cette fois encore, en s’approchant de la fontaine, du perron et de la chapelle; mille fois, il s’appelle malheureux et misérable et tombe évanoui tant sa douleur est grande” (“Alas, that day the lord Yvain / believed he’d lose his mind again . / ... / Since there was no way to atone / for his crime, he was miserable / and in such pain he swooned and fell”).¹⁰²

The uncompromising masculine power that motivated Yvain to abandon her, and to join Gawain and prove his valor through numerous battles with recalcitrant knights, must be tempered if there is going to be any real fecundity, political or emotional, in his relationship with Laudine. Like a synecdoche, the fountain brings to mind the bigger picture, i.e., the heavy downpour that Yvain caused when he originally poured water from the fountain basin onto the rocks to challenge and kill, in decidedly un-chivalric fashion, his wife’s former husband. Yvain’s unhappy encounter with the fountain this time, as well, also sharpens our awareness of his unbalanced power and the extent to which he is disconnected from all of the beneficial and healing qualities that the fountain possesses. To obtain that joy and rapture at the spring, or in his life, he must soften himself with humility before approaching his wife once again. So great is the guilt that Yvain feels while at the fountain that even his Lion companion, his alter ego, attempts to commit suicide on Yvain’s abandoned sword after Yvain cuts his own cheek and neck accidentally on that sword while swooning in grief.¹⁰³

Experiencing guilt is one thing; acting upon it – atoning for it in a way that is honest, humble, and forthright – is another. When Yvain woos back his Lady Landuc through what amounts to a form a trickery arranged between Yvain and the Lady’s maid, Lunette, it is obvious that whatever Yvain has experienced at the fountain has not led to any pronounced self-awareness or growth, but instead has encouraged a false display of self-abnegation and humility¹⁰⁴ that really only

¹⁰² *Yvain, or the Knight with the Lion*, ll. 3297–302; *Le Chevalier au Lion (Yvain)*, 92 (see note 88).

¹⁰³ *Yvain, or the Knight with the Lion*, ll. 3303–05; *Le Chevalier au Lion (Yvain)*, 92 (see note 88).

¹⁰⁴ Yvain, while disguised, prostrates himself in front of Laudine, forcing her to “Raise him up and apply / all of [her] power, strength, and skill / to give him back that peace, good will, / and

masks his desperation to be back in his lady's arms once again. As a touchstone throughout the romance, the fountain helps us register Yvain's moral and relational growth, or lack of it, as he makes his way through his adventures.

Water imagery also underscores the intractable quality of negative emotions in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*¹⁰⁵ and the moral conflicts they foreshadow. In a *tour de force* of saturated description, paving the way for a scene that is well-known for its subjective point of view,¹⁰⁶ the narrator first tells us about the passing of seasons – from the spring “schowrez (showers) ful warme” that fall upon the flowers,¹⁰⁷ through summer’s “dew dropes of the leuez” (dew drops on the leaves),¹⁰⁸ and finally to fall harvests – until we have arrived at the cold, wet, and wintry season of Gawain’s departure to meet once again the Green Knight, who has suffered a blow from Gawain in a beheading contest at King Arthur’s court. In contrast to the cold and miserable weather he will experience shortly, “Wel much was the warme water that waltered of yyen” (flowed from the eyes)¹⁰⁹ of Gawain’s companions as they say goodbye to him. Leaving that warmth and love behind, Gawain then travels alone, within the deep cold of his Christmas journey, to seek the Green Knight. As the birds “pitously ther piped (sang) for pyne (pain) of the colde,”¹¹⁰ Gawain makes his way through the forest

[w]hen the colde cler water fro the cloudez schadde
 And fres er hit falle myght to the fale erthe.
 Ner slain wyth the slete he sleped in his yrnies ...
 Ther as claterande fro the crest the colde borne rennes,
 And henged heghe over his hede in hard ysse-ikkles.
 Thus in peryl and Payne and plytes ful hard
 Bi contray careys this knyght tyl Krystmasse even,
 al one.

pardon” (ll. 6426–29). Laudine pardons this knight, not knowing who he really is. Only then is Yvain’s identity revealed to the Lady, prompting her to say to Lunette: “God save me! / You’ve trapped me neatly, and in spite/ of me, you’ve made me love a knight / who neither loves nor honors me!” (6454–57) (see note 88).

105 All quotations are taken from *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, *Pearl*, *Cleanness*, *Patience*, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (see note 5), 157–254. All translations are my own.

106 Paul Battles, “Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, Stanzas 32–34,” *Explicator* 67.1 (2008), 22–24; here 22. See also Louis Blenkner, O. S. B., “Sin, Psychology, and the Structure of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, *Studies in Philology* 74.4 (1977), 354–87 for a further exploration of the poem’s psychological realism.

107 *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (see note 105), 178, ll. 506–07.

108 *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (see note 105), 178, ll. 519.

109 *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (see note 105), 184, ll. 684.

110 *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (see note 105), 186, l. 747.

[When cold, clear water fell from the clouds, / And froze before it might hit the ground, / Almost slain by the sleet was Gawain, as he slept in his armor / ... / Where the cold streams came clattering down from the crest, / And hung high over his head in hard icicles. / Thus, in peril and pain and difficult hardships / this knight carries on, across the land, until Christmas evening, / alone.]¹¹¹

No other descriptive passage in this romance comes close to foreshadowing the physical and moral danger in which Gawain will find himself when he enters unwittingly into the world of the Green Knight, who is now disguised as Sir Bertilak. Here, Sir Gawain will be seduced by Sir Bertilak's wife and, later on his journey, he will expose his neck to not one but three blows from the Green Knight's huge axe, in a manner that will test Gawain's bravery and expose his moral frailty. At this point on his journey, making his lamenting "mone"¹¹² to Mary through this bleak, wet landscape is all that keeps Gawain on course to seek his fate, whatever that might be. So vivid is this subjectively-rendered scene that despite the ways in which the poet offers up the poem within a "neat package" of chivalric and courtly rituals, consolation, narrative symmetry, and cyclical movement,¹¹³ readers remember this scene in particular for the way in which it makes Gawain appear very vulnerable within a hostile landscape that, like the indifferent landscape in John Gardner's existentialist satire *Grendel*,¹¹⁴ does not much care whether our hero succeeds or fails in his trials.

We also remember the never-ending storm on the heath, in Act 3 of Shakespeare's *King Lear*, precisely because it provides Lear and us with a chaotic accompaniment to the madness that rages inside him, lost to the world and himself.¹¹⁵ Unable to countenance his two older daughters' ungratefulness, and unable to acknowledge his own part in fostering their prideful selfishness, Lear is consumed by the water that flows from his own eyes, the womanly tears brought

111 *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (see note 105), 186, ll. 727–35.

112 *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (see note 105), 186, l. 736.

113 Martin B. Shichtman, in "Sir Gawain and the Green Knight: A Lesson in the Terror of History," *Papers on Language & Literature* 22.1 (1986): 3–15, here 3, debates the ostensible tidiness of this romance by suggesting that the Green Knight "undercuts these rituals ... [and] forces the central characters to abandon their imitations of paradigms and to become involved in a history which unfolds syntagmatically, as a narrative sequence, one which emphasizes the individuality and responsibility of its participants."

114 John Gardner, *Grendel* (New York and Toronto: Vintage, 1989).

115 This relationship between microcosm and macrocosm has been amply explored in Shakespearean criticism. See, for example, Harry Levin, "The Heights and the Depths: A Scene from *King Lear*," *King Lear*, ed. Russell Fraser (1963; New York and Scarborough, Ontario: Signet, 1987), 260–79; here 272.

forth from “hysterica passio,”¹¹⁶ a swelling womb pressing against his heart, a suffocating swelling that gives shape to the humiliation of political and personal weakness rising within him, as he finds himself weeping and railing against the very storm that provides a deafening and thunderous analogue to his unstable state of mind. In this wet and tumultuous world, there is no real respite from the forms of political and personal chaos that are of one’s own making.

Within this scene of weeping, storms, accusations, and madness, we come to understand *King Lear* as one of Shakespeare’s most “impassioned” plays.¹¹⁷ Viewing the play through the lens of William Hazlitt’s understanding of tragedy, William Albrecht claims that through the play’s most emotionally-wrought passages, one might “recognize the power of great tragedy, gained through its intensity of feeling, to bring the mind fully into a captive act and to discover thereby a kind of knowledge superior to that available only to the senses or to logical reasoning.”¹¹⁸ The tears that Lear sheds cannot ever be fully explained through any logical understanding of cause and effect, e.g., “Lear cries because he has lost the love of his daughters” or “Lear cries because he is now faced with the consequences of his moral failings.” When Lear, suffocating from his rising heart and nearly blinded by his womanly tears, is stripped down by his daughter, Regan, to “not one follower” who might tend to the most base of his kingly needs;¹¹⁹ and when, subsequently, Lear enters the stormy heath to expose himself to the cold and wet elements, we come to understand that the complexity of his pain cannot be rationalized in any simple way and that it exceeds the boundaries of even his own comprehension, given that this pain has now been projected onto the stormy heavens themselves.

In Robert de Boron’s thirteenth-century tale of *Merlin*,¹²⁰ King Vortigern, unlike Lear, seems to comprehend the inappropriateness of his behavior toward his children, because he is at least receptive to Merlin’s explanation of the king’s arrogant excesses. His own destabilizing hubris, mixed with a cowardly grasping for power at the expense of his children’s due rights, are mirrored in the unstable body of water¹²¹ that resides deep below his ostentatious castle. When the red

¹¹⁶ *King Lear*, William Shakespeare: *The Complete Works* (see note 58), 1079, 2.4.55.

¹¹⁷ William Price Albrecht, “Hazlitt, Passion, and *King Lear*,” *Studies in English Literature* 18.4 (1978): 611–24; here 611.

¹¹⁸ “Hazlitt, Passion, and *King Lear*” (see note 117), 612.

¹¹⁹ *King Lear* (see note 58), 1082, 2.4.288.

¹²⁰ *Merlin, Merlin and the Grail. Joseph of Arimathea. Merlin. Perceval. The Trilogy of Arthurian Romances attributed to Robert de Boron*, trans. Nigel Bryant (Rochester, NY, and Woodbridge, Suffolk: D. S. Brewer, 2001), 45–114.

¹²¹ *Merlin* (see note 120), 74.

dragon and white dragon battle one another beneath two massive stones that are, themselves, beneath this pool of water, the structure comes tumbling down, forcing Vortigen to rebuild the castle.

Fearful of losing his ill-gotten gains again, Vortigern extracts a damning prophecy from Merlin who explains that, like the red dragon succumbing to the white dragon's power beneath the watery base of his castle, Vortigern will succumb to his children's self-righteous revenge and lose both castle and life. King Vortigern, "appalled by Merlin's words,"¹²² at least can see what chaos is coming his way and how he has precipitated it. As suggested by these two instances of emotional display by kings, which are brought to life through the literal or metaphorical intersection of human behavior with aqueous environments, there seems to be no hope for those who use their power unwisely.

Water and Hope

Despite these dark interpretations of the human condition, we have some very fine illustrations of water imagery that exemplify the yearning hopefulness of possibility and growth. Regardless of whether Chaucer scholars will ever agree that the *Canterbury Tales*, such as we find them, present a hopeful summation of humankind, given the preoccupation of so many of the tales with greed, manipulation, betrayal, and mistrust, we cannot ever forget that these very tales, and the storytelling enterprise itself, begin in "Aprill with his shoures soote."¹²³ Such sweet showers quench the droughts of March and bring forth not just the flowers of springtime, but also feelings of hope and good prospects as well as the very desire to tell tales, the tale-telling enterprise itself a very creative and life-giving enterprise. If hope springs eternal, then this may be the case for our interpretation of Chaucer's tales, which, despite Chaucer's penchant for open endings and meta-textual editorializing, still often still seem to advocate for the hopeful notion that promises both made and kept are "isolated islands of certainty in an ocean of uncertainty,"¹²⁴ and that actions benefiting the good of all, which are

¹²² Merlin (see note 120), 77.

¹²³ "General Prologue," *The Riverside Chaucer* (see note 74), 23, l. 1.

¹²⁴ Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), 244.

laced with forgiveness, weigh more than anything that is self-serving and retributive.¹²⁵

However, if this hopeful example is not quite in keeping with Chaucer's vision of the larger world, then we may turn to Andrew Marvell's "To His Coy Mistress"¹²⁶ for a more lyrical statement about the delicious prospects embodied in loving another person fully, brought to our attention through a delicate but startling use of water imagery. After teasing his lover through hyperbolic and long-suffering praise for all of her body parts, the poem's speaker finally reminds her that "The grave's a fine and private place, / But none, I think, do there embrace."¹²⁷ Then, in a statement signaled by an abrupt change in both tone and imagery, the speaker exhorts his lover to embrace him while their love is young, namely

... while the youthful hue
 Sits on thy skin like morning dew,
 And while thy willing soul transpires
 At every pore with instant fires...¹²⁸

By grasping the significance of how quickly time flies, namely, within the span of the precious few moments that it takes for dew to evaporate from one's skin, the speaker counsels his lover, with great urgency and heart-felt passion, that there is no other way to seize the day and to make the most of one's love for another than to do exactly that, while both flesh and spirit are willing, not weak. Marvell also chooses to use the more personal "thy" rather than "your"¹²⁹ when he observes this dew, driving home the emotional intimacy that he already experiences with her as well as the physical intimacy he so desires, foreshadowed through this subtle moisture on skin.

Seizing the day is easier said than done, however, and therefore we are sometimes reminded that, like the bereft father in the anonymous fourteenth-century

¹²⁵ Chaucer's tales of the Knight, Franklin, Shipman, Wife of Bath, and even the Clerk offer opinions about the importance of compassion, understanding, and forgiveness, but his prose "Tale of Melibee" offers a cornerstone of thought about such attitudes.

¹²⁶ All quotations are taken from "To his Coy Mistress," Andrew Marvell, *Complete Poetry*, ed. George de Forest Lord (New York: Random House, 1968), 23–24.

¹²⁷ "To his Coy Mistress" (see note 126), 24, ll. 31–32.

¹²⁸ "To his Coy Mistress" (see note 126), 24, ll. 33–36.

¹²⁹ Mark Taylor, "Marvell's *To His Coy Mistress*," *Explicator* 53.1 (1994): 15–16; here 15. Taylor does not address this particular use of "thy" in the poem but does focus on lines 25–26, where this pronoun also occurs.

dream vision, the *Pearl*,¹³⁰ there are impasses beyond one's wildest reckonings that keep us from achieving our worldly desires, such that we can only hope for a loving reunion in the afterlife. This is the case for the dreamer, a father who falls asleep in a green garden, disconsolate at having lost his "pearl."¹³¹ Making his way through a land chock-full of pearls and alive with shimmering light, "crystal klyffes," and indigo-colored trees,¹³² the father-dreamer eventually comes to a "strem" so beautiful that he is compelled to lie down beside it, full of "blys."¹³³ Wanting to increase his happiness even more, he desires keenly to cross that stream, motivated by a kind of "grass is greener on the other side of the fence" attitude:

More and more, and yet wel mare,
Me lyste to se the broke byyonde;
For if hit was fayr ther I con fare,
Wel loveloker was the fyrre londe.¹³⁴

At this point in the dream vision, there is nothing to indicate that the father-dreamer cannot wade through the stream and obtain what he seeks on the other land, namely, even more "blys," for earlier in the account, he has gone deeper and deeper into the wood, enjoying ever more the "randes and rych reveres" ("borders of the streams and the splendid river banks")¹³⁵ until this particular stream comes within his purview.

The difference, however, between these earlier streams and this particular one is that this stream, really more like a river, conveys a vague sense of danger: "I wan to a water by schore that scheres"¹³⁶ (I came to some water that quickly ran by its shores). In addition, the father-dreamer spies his "privy perle wythouten spotte"¹³⁷ on the other side of the river, and she, for the remainder of the dream

¹³⁰ *Pearl*, quoted from *Pearl, Cleanliness, Patience, Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (see note 5). Translations are my own unless otherwise indicated.

¹³¹ *Pearl* (see note 130), 3–5, ll. 1–60.

¹³² *Pearl* (see note 130), 5, ll. 74–46. See Thomas Peter Klein, "Six Colour Words in the *Pearl* Poet: *Blake, Blayke, Blazt, Blwe, Blo & Ble*," *Studia Neophilologica* 71 (1999): 156–58 for further discussion of color imagery in this work.

¹³³ *Pearl* (see note 130), 7, ll. 125–26.

¹³⁴ *Pearl* (see note 130), 8, ll. 145–48: More and more, and even more / Did I desire to see beyond the brook; / For if it was beautiful where I walked, / even more lovely was the land on the farther side.

¹³⁵ Trans. Cawley and Anderson.

¹³⁶ *Pearl* (see note 130), 6, l. 106.

¹³⁷ *Pearl* (see note 130), 3, l. 24: Unique and spotless pearl.

vision, patiently explains to him in no uncertain terms that he may not cross that river to be with her again. Unlike the body of water in Shakespeare's sonnet "56" that is so enormous that it conveys a sense of stability, this river in *Pearl* comes across as deep, swiftly-flowing, edgy, and unpredictable – a dangerous force to contend with, if the father-dreamer is going to obtain his wish of fording the river to amend his loss and be in his daughter's company once again. In fact, when the father-dreamer tries to cross the river despite the firmness of her message, conveyed through her doctrinal teachings for the father, he wakes up: "For, right as I sparred unto the bone, / That braththe out of my drem me brayed. / Then wakned I in that erber wlone" ("For, just as I rushed forward to the bank, that impetuous action startled me from my dream,"¹³⁸ and the dreamer suddenly awakes, once again within the beautiful garden).¹³⁹

Perhaps the father-dreamer should be called to task for failing to grasp the spiritual lessons that his daughter offers him. It has been argued that he is too full of pride and "maysterful mod" to absorb those very teachings¹⁴⁰ or is too caught up in a hierarchical understanding of his human universe to appreciate the far-reaching horizontality of a world infused with God's grace,¹⁴¹ or fails in his attempt to impose his patriarchal wishes upon a daughter who is now a bride of Christ and outside her father's control.¹⁴² Perhaps the father-dreamer has, indeed, experienced a near-death experience¹⁴³ but joins the living before he can fully appreciate his life after death. Regardless of how one chooses to interpret the father's awakening and his leave-taking of this crystalline view of heaven, we come to understand by witnessing his struggle on the banks of this swift-flowing river that he has reached an impasse – physiological, spiritual, religious, or psychological – that he cannot surmount, not without returning to the land of the living and contending with his human frailties.

Within the realm of moral agency, the father-dreamer's rude awakening benefits from a comparison to two other literary examples. Like Dante in Canto V of the *Inferno*, discussed earlier, who yearned beyond all measure to know, deep in the recesses of his heart, what the carnal love of Paolo and Francesca might

¹³⁸ Trans. Cawley and Anderson.

¹³⁹ *Pearl* (see note 130), 45, ll. 1169–71.

¹⁴⁰ Rhonda L. McDaniel, "'Maysterful mod and hyghe pryd ... arn heterly hated here': Losing Pride and Finding Oneself in *Pearl*," *Interdisciplinary Humanities* 30.1 (2013): 72–87.

¹⁴¹ "Josephine Bloomfield, "Stumbling Toward God's Light: The *Pearl* Dreamer and the Impediments of Hierarchy," *The Chaucer Review* 45.4 (2011): 390–410.

¹⁴² Bloomfield, "Stumbling Toward God's Light" (see note 141), 401.

¹⁴³ Susan Gunn, "Pearl: Medieval Dream Vision and Modern Near-Death Experience," *Journal of Religion & Psychical Research* 18.3 (1995): 132–41.

have felt like but who was, instead, rewarded with a bout of fainting to wrest him from his excessive human curiosity and train his eyes toward God instead, just so the father-dreamer in *Pearl* also swoons — “A longeyng hevy me stok in swone.” (A heavy longing struck me in a swoon)¹⁴⁴ — after he has been forced to leave his dream, a not-so-subtle reminder that he needs to pay his dues on this earth first, through humility and an attitude of *contemptus mundi*,¹⁴⁵ before he can reach his daughter’s exalted state. Also, not unlike the wayward knight in Chaucer’s “Wife of Bath’s Tale,” the father-dreamer learns that he simply cannot have all that he wants.

This knight, who has raped a maiden and now has been sent by Queen Guinevere on a quest to learn what it is that women want most, eagerly approaches “ladyes foure and twenty, and yet mo[re]” who delight him with their dancing;¹⁴⁶ but he discovers to his dismay that just as he draws closer to them, they vanish, an old hag standing in their place and smiling. Similarly, the father-dreamer becomes insistent on crossing the river to be with his little daughter but then is quickly taken from his sleep and dream, frustrated in his desires. His actions, of course, are motivated by grief and not lust,¹⁴⁷ the latter being the grievous fault of the Wife of Bath’s knight. And yet we come to understand through these two comparisons of Dante’s *Inferno* with Chaucer’s “Wife of Bath’s Tale” that the world is paradoxically both an inscrutable, fickle place as well as one governed by particular social, ethical, and religious rules, and that, at least in this medieval world, our right relationship with God mixed with a healthy dose of humility can, at the very least, offer some kind of consolation as we continue our struggle here, on this moral, and mortal, earth.

Conclusion

Perhaps we can transform the stories and accounts discussed above through our substitution of air, earth, or fire in place of water, imagining the individuals in

¹⁴⁴ *Pearl* (see note 130), 46, l. 1180.

¹⁴⁵ *Pearl* (see note 130), 47, ll. 1195–96.

¹⁴⁶ “The Wife of Bath’s Tale,” *The Riverside Chaucer* (see note 74), 118, ll. 991–92.

¹⁴⁷ See Carolyn Dinshaw, *Chaucer’s Sexual Poetics* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990), for her study of the connection between the knight’s desire for the dancing ladies and his rape of the maiden earlier in the romance. At this point on the knight’s quest, he has not learned that he cannot act on his sexual desires at whim and clearly has not learned what women desire most.

these stories coming to terms with their emotional and moral relationship with others by contending, or at least interacting, with the other three of the Four Elements. Sisyphus, after all, must forever roll a heavy boulder up a steep hill, only to have it come rolling down again, in punishment for his deceit and pride. Beowulf also must fight against a fire-breathing “wyrm” now that he is an older king. Many sinners in Dante’s *Inferno* must suffer the effects of horrible winds. Shakespeare’s plays, in particular *Macbeth* and *Julius Caesar*, have benefitted from being produced and shown outside, in order to make use of various natural landscapes and the elements of changing weather¹⁴⁸ to enhance performance, motifs, and themes.

George Herbert, in addition, enriches his poetry with references to two of the other Four Elements. In “The Collar” (1633), the speaker claims that his life is as “free as the rode, / Loose as the winde,”¹⁴⁹ when, in fact, he feels caged in and fettered by a “rope of sands”¹⁵⁰ that represents the confining nature of Herbert’s Anglican attire and profession as priest which, to him, no longer have any moral or spiritual significance anymore (hence, a rope made of “sand”). Finally, both Yvain, within his narrative, and Nebuchadnezzar in *Cleanness*, referenced earlier in this essay, must contend with physical deprivation within a primitive and wild landscape as a reflection of their turning away from God (for Nebuchadnezzar) or queen (for Yvain).

However, thanks to the physical properties of water itself – its ability to change states, becoming fluid or frozen; its ability to be penetrated and yet act as barrier or impasse; its translucence and opaqueness; its ability to nourish and kill, either to challenge or to defeat, and both to facilitate and to hamper movement – this particular substance seems ideally suited to help authors characterize the panoply of emotions and relational states that make up the human condition as well as give shape to moral behavior as people interact with their environment and with others. Within these complex intersections of characterization, water, and moral/relational behavior, within a variety of medieval and Renaissance settings, one can therefore come to appreciate some of the defining qualities of our own humanity.

148 Kevin Newman, “No Enemy but Winter and Rough Weather,” *Maclean’s* (July 1, 2001), www.ebscohost.com (last accessed on Jan. 17, 2016).

149 “The Collar,” *The Works of George Herbert*, ed. F. E. Hutchinson (Oxford, London, et al.: The Clarendon Press, 1941), 153, ll. 4–5.

150 “The Collar” (see note 149), 153, l. 22.

Fabian Alfie

The Sonnet about Women who Marry in Old Age: Filth, Misogyny, and Depravity

“Where there is dirt there is a system.”

Mary Douglas¹

Generally speaking, literary scholars gravitate toward masterpieces, which almost by definition are atypical for cultures in which they are composed. Masterpieces are written by highly educated, highly literate individuals who are able to take a critical eye toward their community, and its beliefs, practices, and standards. From a historical-cultural point of view, it is sometimes the ordinary texts, non-masterpieces, that can prove most valuable. Precisely because they are typical, the community attitudes, the received literary and cultural traditions, and the power dynamics of a society are often revealed in non-masterpieces with more clarity.

This paper is the study of one such typical text, a fourteenth- or fifteenth-century sonnet found in four manuscripts from Tuscany or Northern Italy. The subject matter of the anonymous sonnet is one which is familiar to most scholars of the late Middle Ages, namely *vituperium in vetulam* or the denigration and abuse of the stereotyped image of the old woman. By the time of the composition of the sonnet under examination, the topos of the *vituperium in vetulam* was already a centuries-long literary tradition, with the earliest examples of it appearing in the literary treatises of the twelfth-century writers Matthew of Vendôme, and Bon-

¹ Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London and New York: Ark Paperbacks, 1988), 35. See also Albrecht Classen's Introduction to this volume. Editor's note: As to the question regarding literary masterpieces, trivial texts, and best-sellers, see the contributions to *Literatur am Rand: Perspektiven der Trivialliteratur vom Mittelalter bis zum 21. Jahrhundert*, ed. Albrecht Classen and Eva Parra-Membriques. Popular Fiction Studies, 1 (Tübingen: Narr Verlag, 2013); and to *Bestseller – gestern und heute: Ein Blick vom Rand zum Zentrum der Literaturwissenschaft / Bestseller – Yesterday and Today: A Look from the Margin to the Center of Literary Studies*, ed. Albrecht Classen and Eva Parra Membriques. Popular Fiction Studies, 2 (Tübingen: Narr, 2016).

compagno da Signa,² who based their works on passages from the classical tradition. Afterwards, the image of the horrible old woman appeared in literature as varied as poems, prose narratives, sermons, and moralizing pamphlets.³ During the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries, *vituperium in vetulam* and related misogynistic statements were commonplaces in Italian and other European poetry, found in poems too numerous to mention.⁴

None of this discussion is intended to suggest that the sonnet to be studied is uninteresting from a strictly literary point of view because it demonstrates some poetic acumen. But since it deals with topics such as old age, the body, and misogyny, it also communicates cultural teachings about the body, filth, and women in a relatively straightforward manner. It therefore contributes to the theme of this volume dedicated to hygiene and its opposite, filth, in the Middle Ages and early modern period.

At first blush misogyny and filth might appear to be topics unrelated to one another, but in the anti-woman literature of the Middle Ages they were tightly bound to one another. The topos of literary misogyny had its roots in two traditions of classical literature, secular satire and Patristic writings; the classical secular examples included Juvenal's sixth satire, Ovid's *Remedia amoris*, Sallust's descriptions of Sempronia.⁵ Among the writings of Church Fathers, probably the most influential piece of antifeminist writing for over a millennium was

² See Matthew of Vendôme, *The Art of Versification*, trans. Aubrey E. Galyon (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1980): I. 58; and Boncompagno da Signa, *Rota veneris: A Facsimile Reproduction of the Strasburg Incunabulum*, ed. and trans. Josef Purkart (New York: Delmar, 1975), 90–91.

³ Gretchen Mieszkowski, "Old Age and Medieval Misogyny: The Old Woman," *Old Age in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance: Interdisciplinary Approaches to a Neglected Topos*, ed., Albrecht Classen. Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture, 2 (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 2007), 299–319; here 299.

⁴ For representative readings of the topoi of misogyny and *vituperium in vetulam* in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, see the following studies: Bruno Bentivogli, "Sonetti misogini da codici quattrocenteschi," *Studi in onore di Raffaele Spongano* (Bologna: Boni, 1980), 73–93; Diego Zancani, "Misoginia padana del Quattrocento e testi scurrili del Cinquecento: Due nuovi testimoni del *Manganus* ovvero *Manganello*," *Schede umanistiche* 1 (1995), 19–43; Diego Zancani, "Burchiello e la tradizione misogina," *La fantasia fuor de' confini: Burchiello e dintorni a 550 anni dalla morte (1449–1999). Atti del Convegno* (Firenze, 26 novembre 1999), ed. Michelangelo Zaccarello (Roma: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2002), 115–25; Josip B. Percan, 'Femina dulce malum.' *La donna nella letteratura medievale latina* (Roma: Edizioni Kappa, 2003); and Fabian Alfie "Like She-Cats in January: An Anonymous Fifteenth-Century Misogynistic Sonnet," *Mediævistik* 26 (2013): 207–15.

⁵ P. G. Walsh, "Antifeminism in the High Middle Ages," *Satiric Advice on Women and Marriage: From Plautus to Chaucer*, ed. Warren S. Smith (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 2005), 222–42; here 224–25.

Jerome's *Adversus Jovinianum*, which was inspired in part by the classical satirical tradition.⁶ Patristic literature was not misogynistic for the sake of simply being misogynistic, but rather it served to encourage male readers to reject women and sexuality, and to embrace instead monastic chastity because the body itself was regarded as the greatest danger for the spiritual well-being.⁷ As Katharine M. Rogers notes, "In an effort to nullify women's influence, Church Fathers insisted that the female body is not an attractive object, but a vessel of filth."⁸ The depiction of women as disgusting in Patristic literature, therefore, was more than a continuation of satirical tropes, because the repulsion it inspired reinforced religious and ethical teachings.⁹

After the literary tradition of misogyny was established, its continuators elaborated very little upon it, preferring instead to repeat familiar commonplaces.¹⁰ For centuries the medieval cultural discourse of misogyny portrayed women through their character flaws (vanity, arrogance, deceit, loquaciousness), and through their physical repulsiveness.¹¹ In this literature women were also cast in a darker light as sinful and sexually voracious. They pursued their sexuality like animals, to the point of being insatiable¹²; worse still, their boundless sexual appetite was joined to willfulness, and therefore unlike animals they deviated from the natural order.¹³ In misogynistic literature, women's physical repulsiveness was supposed to lead to the readers' moral rejection of them and of the pleasures of the body.

The literary tradition of *vituperium in vetulam* shares in many of the aims of general misogynistic writings, and it similarly manipulates the readers' disgust to ethical ends. As referenced above, the earliest extant example of medieval *vituperium in vetulam* probably appears in Matthew of Vendôme's literary treatise

⁶ Ralph Hanna III and Traugott Lawler, ed., *Jankyn's Book of Wikked Wives: The Primary Texts*, vol. 1 (Athens, GA, and London: Georgia University Press, 1997), 17–18.

⁷ Katharine M. Rogers, *The Troublesome Helpmate: A History of Misogyny in Literature* (Seattle, WA, and London: Washington University Press, 1966), 8.

⁸ Rogers, *The Troublesome Helpmate* (see note 7), 22.

⁹ William Ian Miller, *The Anatomy of Disgust* (Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press, 1997), 117.

¹⁰ R Howard Bloch, *Medieval Misogyny and the Invention of Western Romantic Love* (Chicago and London: Chicago University Press, 1991), 2.

¹¹ Patrizia Bettella, *The Ugly Woman: Transgressive Aesthetic Models in Italian Poetry from the Middle Ages to the Baroque* (Toronto, Buffalo, and London: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 10.

¹² James A Brundage, *Law, Sex and Christian Society in Medieval Europe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 427.

¹³ Joan Cadden, *The Meanings of Sex Difference in the Middle Ages: Medicine, Science, Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 149–150.

Ars versificatoria (ca. 1175), and it is that treatise that influenced the subsequent tradition in Italy.¹⁴ Matthew embraced the Averroistic mindset that all literature was a subset of ethics in that it either praised the virtuous or blamed the sinful.¹⁵ Matthew maintained that the mere descriptions of characters should communicate the author's praise or blame of them, and not any explicit statement of condemnation.¹⁶ Praise and blame characterized the two literary genres of tragedy and comedy, but it is clear that Matthew's definition of comedy overlapped with that of satire, which derided vice. In his *Ars versificatoria*, Matthew provides several examples of laudatory descriptions, and just one example of blame through the portrait of the old hag Beroë (I.58, pp. 44–45). Over the course of forty-five verses, he exposes her nauseating physical state, detailing her stench, filth, parasites, and bodily secretions. In Matthew's literary system, the readers' disgust inspires their ethical reprehension of the character, so it is not coincidental that Matthew selected an old woman for his sole example of blame. When writing descriptions, the characters, he insists, should stand in for an entire class of people (I.60, p. 45). From a cultural perspective intense disgust was a means to reject groups of people deemed unacceptable, such as Jews, lepers, heretics, and women.¹⁷ Matthew selected a woman – and not a lover's young lady at that – as his generic model of literary blame, thus indicating the pervasiveness of misogynistic notions in twelfth-century culture.

It is important that Matthew, and indeed many subsequent authors of *vituperium in vetulam*, emphasized the old woman's revolting odor and bodily fluids. During the Middle Ages, corporeal effluvia were symbolic of the sinfulness of human nature because the liquids were seen as violating the boundaries and assumed wholeness of the body.¹⁸ Rejection of the body, therefore, was not only an ethical prerogative, but also an important means of personal hygiene. Rather than being the self-contained unit that God intended, with its many orifices the

¹⁴ For an overview of Matthew's importance for medieval literary theory, see Ernst Robert Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, trans. from the German by Willard R. Trask. Bollingen Series, XXXVI (1948; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953), 489–93.

¹⁵ Alastair Minnis, and A. B. Scott, *Medieval Literary Theory and Criticism, c. 1100–c.1375. The Commentary-Tradition* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 282–84. See also Judson Boyce Allen, *The Ethical Poetic of the Later Middle Ages: A Decorum of Convenient Distinction* (Toronto and London: University Press of Toronto, 1983), 19–20.

¹⁶ Matthew of Vendôme, *The Art of Versification* (see note 3), 5–6.

¹⁷ Alexandra Cuffel, *Gendering Disgust in Medieval Religious Polemic* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), 6.

¹⁸ Martha Bayless, *Sex and Filth in Medieval Culture: The Devil in the Latrine* (New York and London: Routledge, 2012), 21.

body was an open system, and non-virginal women were less self-enclosed than others.¹⁹ The body's propensity to leak fluids and generate filth was a direct, literal consequence of human sinfulness,²⁰ and the female body was worse in this regard through menstruation and childbirth. Menstrual blood in particular indicated women's inferiority, and many thinkers associated it, and the womb that produced it, with dirt, decay, feces, and other foul substances.²¹ An old woman such as Beroë was viewed as even more noxious because her menstrual blood, which her body had stopped emitting during menopause, rotted inside her body and released dangerous vapors, thereby contaminating her surroundings.²² And yet, frequently the old woman is presented as a sexual temptation. Boncompagno urged men to marry wealthy old women, with the expectation of sexual intercourse, "even if she were the oldest of hags and all her teeth had already fallen out of her mouth, so that only her fluid and foaming gums had remained" (ch. VIII, pp. 90–91). In the hands of Matthew, Boncompagno, and the other writers of *vituperium in vetulam*, the old woman was a living symbol of bodily decay, but also of the body's sexual excess,²³ which itself could contaminate another person through contact with bodily fluids.²⁴ *Vituperium in vetulam* encapsulated the satiric aims of comedy because by definition to love an old woman was con-

¹⁹ Suzanne E. Hatty and James Hatty, *The Disordered Body: Epidemic Disease and Cultural Transformation* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1999), 171–72. See also Susan Signe Morrison, *Excrement in the Late Middle Ages: Sacred Filth and Chaucer's Fecopoetics*. The New Middle Ages (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008), 46.

²⁰ Martha Bayless, *Sex and Filth in Medieval Culture: The Devil in the Latrine* (see note 17), xviii.

²¹ There are numerous writings about the association of menstrual blood and filth. For representative readings, see the following: Alexandra Cuffel, *Gendering Disgust in Medieval Religious Polemic* (see note 18), 26–27; Susan Signe Morrison, *Excrement in the Late Middle Ages: Sacred Filth and Chaucer's Fecopoetics* (see note 20), 45; and Guyda Armstrong, "Boccaccio and the Infernal Body: The Widow as Wilderness," *Boccaccio and Feminist Criticism*, ed., Thomas C. Stillinger and F. Regina Psaki. *Studi e testi*, 8 (Chapel Hill, NC: Annali d'Italianistica, 2006), 83–104; here 85–86.

²² Valerie Allen, *On Farting: Language and Laughter in the Middle Ages*. The New Middle Ages (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 60. See also Sarah Allison Miller, *Medieval Monstrosity and the Female Body* (New York and London: Routledge, 2010), 29.

²³ Jan M. Ziolkowski, "The Obscenities of Old Women: Veturality and Vernacularity," *Obscenity: Social Control and Artistic Creation in the European Middle Ages*, ed., Jan M. Ziolkowski (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 1998), 73–89; here 86. See also Patrizia Bettella, *The Ugly Woman: Transgressive Aesthetic Models in Italian Poetry from the Middle Ages to the Baroque* (see note 12), 6.

²⁴ Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (see note 2), 6.

sidered obscene.²⁵ The fictional figure of the old woman cannot be reduced to univocal meaning, as it changed from author to author, but in general she was a symbol who embodied human sinfulness in its myriad forms.

The general comments about misogyny and *vituperium in vetulam* above inform the sonnet under examination. Since the sonnet has not been edited, its codicology needs to be discussed first. There seem to be only four extant manuscripts holding the sonnet. According to the *Incipitario Unificato della Poesia Italiana*, a research tool that lists the *incipit* verses of published poems, variants of the anonymous sonnet are found in two manuscripts, Parma Palatino 1081 and of Udine 10.²⁶ Another research tool, the *Incipitario della lirica italiana dei secoli XIII e XIV*, notes that the lyric appears in two other codices, both found in the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana (BAV), Reginense Latini 1973 and Urbinati Latini 1439.²⁷ Additionally, a fifth poem with a similar incipit verse, also appears in the Udine 10 manuscript and will be discussed at the end of this study. All four extant source manuscripts were probably produced at different times during the fifteenth century.²⁸ In addition, none of the manuscripts contains the name of the author of this work. Thus, given the current state of information it is difficult to determine which version of the sonnet is most authoritative.²⁹

²⁵ Alastair Minnis, "From *coilles* to *Bel Chose*: Discourses of Obscenity in Jean de Meun and Chaucer," *Medieval Obscenities*, ed. Nicola McDonald (York: York Medieval Press, 2006): 156–178; here 156.

²⁶ Marco Santagata, ed., *Incipitario unificato della poesia italiana*, vol. 2 (Modena: Panini, 1988), 1816.

²⁷ Fabio Carboni, *Incipitario della lirica italiana dei secoli XIII e XIV* (Città del Vaticano: Biblioteca apostolica vaticana, 1977), 409.

²⁸ Emilio Costa asserts that Parma Palatino 1081 was compiled either at the end of the *Trecento* or the beginning of the *Quattrocento*; see Emilio Costa, "Il codice Parmense 1081," *Giornale storico della letteratura italiana* 12 (1888), 79. Regarding the dating of Udine 10, some difference of opinion exists. Giovanni Fabris believes it was compiled before 1461, while Lewis Hall Gordon considers it completed in 1470. See Giovanni Fabris, "Un sonetto di Santa Caterina da Siena," *Memorie storiche forgiuliesi* 3 (1907), 132–165; here 135; and Lewis Hall Gordon, "Burchiello inedito," *Italica* 33 (1956): 121–139; here 136. Cosimus Stornajolo claims only that BAV Urbinati Latini 1439 was composed at some time during the fifteenth century. See Cosimus Stornajolo, *Codices Urbinate Latini*, vol. 2 (Rome: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1912), 330. No known published description of BAV Reginense Latini 1973 exists, but physical examination of it shows that it belongs to the latter fifteenth century, or possibly the early sixteenth century. For instance, folios 31r–v contain sonnets by Burchiello (b. ca. 1404–d. 1449) and a marginal note on folio 23r makes reference to a certain Florentine captain of 1447.

²⁹ It should be mentioned that Emilio Costa's article, "Il codice parmense 1081," also provides a *lectio* of the sonnet in question, but it is based solely upon the version situated in the Parmesan manuscript (p. 36). Costa's reading of the sonnet follows: "Veder ti possa io, uechia stomac[h]-

Although no two versions of the sonnet are identical, they are all close enough in meaning that one exemplar will suffice for this discussion, and the other three versions will be reproduced in the appendix below. Furthermore, none of the versions share the same formal qualities. The version selected below appears in BAV Urbinati Latini 1439, and it is the longest of the four versions, with two additional strophes following the typical fourteen-line sonnet form; the version in Parma Palatino has one additional stanza and not two, the version in Udine 10 is a normal fourteen-line sonnet, and the version in BAV Reginense Latini 1973 is damaged and therefore consists of only twelve extant lines. The reproduction of the version from BAV Urbinati Latini 1439 in the body of this study is not intended to suggest that it is the most authentic, as the two additional strophes might have been added by someone other than the original poet. Rather, it was selected to be representative only because, as the longest, it is the most thorough. All of the sonnets in this study have been transcribed diplomatically, with the scribal abbreviations expanded and marked by italic lettering; the only other editorial intervention is distinguishing “v” from “u.” An English translation appears after each version. The version of the sonnet from BAV Urbinati Latini 1439 (f. 145v) reads as follows:

Rubric: Sonetus de senectute ductas

Veder te possa, o vechia stomachoxa
nuda in brazo a 5 cento leonj
a tigri e ursi leopardi, e dragonj
chal meo piacer te fazan dollaroxa

o pasto da lupi, o vechia fastidioxo
bisce e ranochi e anchor scorpioni
mosche e vespe tafani e galavroni
avestu nel corpo scrofazza noglioza

Bechin te possa corvi e cornachie
gazze e polgiane gli ochi e le cervelle
niby avoltori e anchor le monachie

osa, / Nuda in le braccia a 600 leoni, / A orsi, tigri, leopardi e drag[h]oni, / Che al mio piacer ti
faccin dol[l]orosa; / In c[h]orpo auestu, femina noiosa, / Bisce, ranocchi, uespe e[t] c[h]alabroni,
/ Rospi, sang[h]uette, tafani e mosc[h]oni, / Che t'affog[h]assen, porc[h]a fastidiosa! / Pasto
da lupi, da c[h]orbe e [da] c[h]ornacchie, / G[h]azze e ghiandaie ti becchin le ceruella, / Li nibbi,
li auoltoi e [l]le mulacchie, / Al sol la uista strassen le budella, / L'un ti pilucchi, l'altro t'abata-
chie, / I uermi uor[i] tragg[h]an la c[h]oradella, / Anc[h]or ti nasc[h]an mille uermicani, / Che
sempre abbai, c[h]ome fan li c[h]ani.” (Note: all brackets, and material therein, are provided by
Costa).

da lusse te delpichi carne e pelle
 lun te speluchi e laltro te sbadachie
 altro veda destrex le budelle

ancora ti venga tanti Vmi canj
 che in corpo te cridi come mille canj

i quali ognior te schani
 e fazan del tuo cuor tanto stratio
 che ogniu di lor fia purghi e satio

[Rubric: Sonnet about women who marry in old age

I wish I could see you, disgusting old woman,
 nude in the arms of five hundred lions,
 of tigers, bears, leopards, and dragons,
 who, for my pleasure, cause you pain;

Oh, meal for wolves, oh annoying old woman,
 may you have in your body, annoying sow,
 asps, and frogs, and scorpions,
 flies and wasps, gadflies and bottle flies,

may crows and ravens,
 magpies and buzzards pick at your brains and eyes,
 and vultures and kites and hooded crows

gut you and pick at your flesh and skin
 may one pluck you and the other bludgeon you,
 and another see your guts spread out.

and still may so many dog-worms come to you
 in your body so that you'll scream like a thousand dogs

which always flay you
 and cause your heart so much torture
 that every one of them will be purged and sated.]

Despite its extreme language, the sonnet above is consonant with the Italian literature at that time. The topos of *vituperium in vetulam* appears to have been introduced to the Italian literary tradition through two poets who lived contemporaneously with each other, Rustico Filippi (ca. 1230–ca. 1299) and Guido Guinizzelli (ca. 1230–1276).³⁰ Rustico followed Matthew of Vendôme's teachings closely, describing his vile old woman in a third-person manner and making the

³⁰ Fabian Alfie, "Old Lady Avignon: Petrarch's *Rerum Vulgarium Fragmenta* 136 and the Topos of *Vituperium in Vetulam*," *Italian Culture* 30.2 (September 2012): 100–09; here 102–04.

readers response to result in reprehension.³¹ Guido, conversely, innovates on the tradition. In his sonnet, Guinizzelli spends little time portraying the woman, and instead he composes a violent poetics, calling on different forces to destroy her.³² A whirlwind should come down upon her head, he writes, or a tempest should kill her (vv. 1–4); heaven should strike her down quickly (vv. 5–8), and give her flesh to scavengers (vv. 9–11). Aggressive expressions such as these are not found in Matthew's passage nor in Rustico's sonnet, but in Guinizzelli's wake they became commonplace in the Italian poetic tradition.³³ The anonymous sonnet under examination, however, is a veritable *summa* of Guinizzellian violent poetics. From start to finish, its author hopes to see the woman torn apart by different wild animals, birds, and insects. Violence is a convention in comic texts, and at times can be seen as a desired punishment for wayward characters.³⁴ Mikhail Bakhtin notes the destruction of the body in carnivalesque literature, seeing it also as a potentially generative force.³⁵ Yet nothing in the sonnet indicates a lesson to be taught, nor is there a suggestion of productivity in her destruction. She is the embodiment of depravity whose very existence poses a threat to society,³⁶ and therefore she should be obliterated.

The threat presented by the old woman of the sonnet is, in part, sexual. The rubric of the sonnet, which indicates a satire of women who marry at an advanced age, implies her sexual activities. To be sure, BAV Urbinati Latini 1439 is the only manuscript that contains this rubric, so it might not be reliable. However, textual elements in the sonnet also suggest her sexuality. The poet states that he would like to see her “nude in the arms” (“nuda in braco,” v. 2) of the wild beasts. Fur-

³¹ Rustico's example of *vituperium in vetulam* is his sonnet, “Dovunque vai, con teco porti il cesso” (“Wherever you go, you bring the cesspool”). For an edition and translation of Rustico Filippi, see Fabian Alfie, ed. and trans., *Rustico Filippi: The Art of Insult* (Cambridge: MHRA, 2014).

³² Guido's example of *vituperium in vetulam* is his sonnet, “Volvol te levi, vecchia rabbiosa” (“May a whirlwind strike you, vicious old woman”). For an edition and translation of Guido Guinizzelli, see Robert Edwards, ed. and trans., *The Poetry of Guido Guinizzelli* (New York and London: Garland, 1987).

³³ Guinizzelli might have taken inspiration from Ovid, who similarly hopes for the old woman's death. See Karen Pratt, “*De vetula*: The Figure of the Old Woman in Medieval French Literature,” *Old Age in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance: Interdisciplinary Approaches to a Neglected Topic*, ed. Albrecht Classen. Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture, 2 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2007), 321–42; here 333.

³⁴ Jody Enders, ed. and trans., *The Farce of the Fart and other Ribaldries: Twelve Medieval French Plays in Modern English* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 18–19.

³⁵ Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. Hélène Iswolsky (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1968), 26.

³⁶ William Ian Miller, *The Anatomy of Disgust* (see note 10), 8.

thermore, the poem reflects medieval beliefs regarding the animals of the first quatrain: lions, tigers, bears, leopards, and dragons. The ferocious animals were marked by their purported sexual practices. According to the bestiaries of the time, lions “copulate the backward way,” as do tigers and hyenas.³⁷ Bears, conversely, copulate “in the human way.”³⁸ Leopards were believed to be born “from the adultery of a lioness with a pard, which produces this third kind of animal” which, like a mule, is sterile.³⁹ In the second stanza, the poet continues in this vein. Snakes and frogs should enter her body (vv. 6–8); vipers were said to flee before a naked man,⁴⁰ a belief that Richard of Fournival used to satirize love by comparing vipers to women.⁴¹ The old woman should be “nude in the arms” of wild beasts whose legends included their sexual behaviors, which is consonant with much of *vituperium in vetulam* trope where the repulsive woman is also sexualized. Thus, the multitude of wild animals should dismember the old woman, and there is a sexual connotation to their violence.

In the second and third stanzas, the sonnet adds more creatures to the list of those to torment her, and in the process it shifts in its portrait of the old woman. Worms, flies and other insects were understood not to hatch from eggs, but to be spontaneously generated from rotting flesh; scorpions were considered a species of worm, and therefore they too were seen as a product of putrefaction.⁴² Snakes were also said to be created out of the spinal marrow of dead bodies.⁴³ Crows and ravens ate the eyes of corpses and drew out the brain through the orbital cavities,⁴⁴ and kites, buzzards and vultures were acknowledged as carrion-eaters.⁴⁵ In short, this is not a random list of animals and vermin because together they form a picture of the old woman decaying from within. Her advanced age has caused her to putrefy while still alive, but her body’s filth and rot are also correlated to the ideas about the female body, described above. She is the female

³⁷ T. H. White, ed. and trans., *The Book of Beasts, being a Translation from a Bestiary of the Twelfth Century* (New York: Putnam’s Sons, 1954), 10. For the genre of bestiaries, see the contribution to this volume by Cynthia White.

³⁸ T. H. White, ed. and trans., *The Book of Beasts* (see note 38), 46.

³⁹ T. H. White, ed. and trans., *The Book of Beasts* (see note 38), 13–14.

⁴⁰ T. H. White, ed. and trans., *The Book of Beasts* (see note 38), 188.

⁴¹ Richard of Fournival, *Master Richard’s Bestiary of Love and Response*, trans. Jeanette Beer (West Lafayette, IN: NotaBell Books, 2000), 6.

⁴² T. H. White, ed. and trans., *The Book of Beasts* (see note 38), 191–192.

⁴³ T. H. White, ed. and trans., *The Book of Beasts* (see note 38), 190–191.

⁴⁴ Hugh of Fouilloy, *The Medieval Book of Birds: Hugh of Fouilloy’s Aviarium*, ed. and trans., Willene B. Clark. Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 80 (Binghamton, NY: Medieval & Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1992), 174–75.

⁴⁵ Hugh of Fouilloy, *The Medieval Book of Birds* (see note 45), 206–07.

body. Additionally, in the oral culture of medieval Italy “filthy” and “rotten” were common insults of women, insults that drew the connection between prostitution and pollution.⁴⁶ To wit, throughout the poem she is both repulsive and sexual at the same time, a potential contaminant for the people around her; indeed, she is repulsive because she is sexual.

Lastly, the poet hopes that dog-worms (“Vmi canj,” v. 16) will grow inside of her and cause her to howl. The dog-worm (*vermocane*) was a parasite that caused extreme pain in the stomach and bowels, fever, delirium, and convulsions. As such, it too was considered a by-product of putrefaction. Yet in the verbal culture of that age, “may a dog-worm be born inside of you” (“te nasca il *vermocane*”) was a curse considered seriously by the law. The curse was frequently gendered, with the location of the parasite specified as the anus for men, and the vagina for women. Since it was a disease also found in horses, the curse offended the idea of human nature being categorically distinct from animal nature, and therefore was at times considered blasphemous.⁴⁷ Hence, as frequently occurs in the *topos* of *vituperium in vetulam*, the anonymous poet dehumanizes the old woman, reducing her to the level of animals. She is beastly, filthy, and sexual, and worthy only to be destroyed by people and nature alike. As has been demonstrated throughout this study, these are three concepts that misogynistic authors linked together in order to dissuade men from relationships with women.

As mentioned previously, the *Incipitario Unificato della Poesia Italiana (IUPI)* lists another sonnet in relation to that studied above.⁴⁸ It is located in the Udine 10 manuscript (f. 181r, *unicus*). Giovanni Fabris published the first description of that codex, and at the end of his article, he included an appendix that reproduced some of the anonymous poetry therein, including the sonnet.⁴⁹ The second sonnet possesses an *incipit* verse similar to that seen above, and it too engages in the aesthetics of *vituperium in vetulam*. It reads:

46 Trevor Dean, “Gender and Insult in an Italian City: Bologna in the Later Middle Ages,” *Social History* 29.2 (2004): 217–31, here 219.

47 Trevor Dean, “Gender and Insult in an Italian City: Bologna in the Later Middle Ages” (see note 47), 224–27.

48 Marco Santagata, ed., *Incipitario unificato della poesia italiana* (see note 27), vol. 2, p. 1816.

49 Giovanni Fabris, “Il codice udinese Ottelio di antiche rime volgari,” *Memorie storiche forgiuliesi* 5 (1909): 210–35, here 214. Fabris’s reading of the sonnet is as follows: “Veder ti possa uechia scarelata / Grinza, pellosa, tosa, senza denti, / Rognosa, goba, piena di lamenti, / In sun bancheto al sol per la contrata. / Canuta, pianzolenta, et amalata, / In odio a dio, et a li tuo parenti, / Fuor di memoria, senza sentimenti, / In vn pelinzoncelo auolupata / Chio possa dir doue le trece doro / Che mi ligaro el cuor con dolci nodi: / Doue la giovaneza el bel thesoro / Doue quegli occhi che con dolci chiodi / Me fisso el cuor con disiato foro / E doue son le tue parole e modi?”

Veder ti possa vechia scarpelata
 grinza, pellosa, tosa, senza denti
 ragnosa, goba, piena di lamenti,
 insun bancheto al sol per la contrata.

Canuta, pianzolenta, et amalata
 in odio a dio, et ali tuo parenti:
 fuor di memoria, senza sentimenti:
 in vn pelinzonçelo avolupata.

Chio possa dir doue le trece doro
 che mi legaro el cuor a dolci nodi:
 dove la giouinezza el bel thesoro

Dove quegli ochi che con dolci chiodi
 me fissee el cuor con disiato foro
 e dove son le tue parole e modi

[I wish I could see you, wrinkled old woman,
 creased, hairy, bald, toothless,
 spidery, hunchbacked, full of complaints,
 on a stage in the sun for the whole neighborhood.

White-haired, whimpering, and sick,
 hated by God, and by your relatives,
 beyond memory and beyond sentiments:
 enveloped in a small pelt.

May I say, where are the golden tresses
 that bound my heart with sweet knots;
 where's her youth and her beautiful treasure?

Where are those eyes that with sweet nails
 affixed my heart with its desired opening,
 and where are your words and manners?]

This is a typical fourteen-line sonnet with the rhyme scheme of ABBA ABBA CDC DCD, but it is the *incipit* verse that grabs our attention. The similarity between the opening lines of the two sonnets is so strong that it may not have been coincidental. Emilio Pasquini dedicates a lengthy article to the praxis of authors of the *Quattrocento* who rewrote other people's poetry. Frequently, poets borrowed verses or indeed entire stanzas from previous writers and then redacted the rest of the poem to meet their own individual needs. Due to this practice, Pasquini argues that the minor literature of the fifteenth century dedicated itself to the

recovery and re-elaboration of earlier texts.⁵⁰ Thus, it is possible that the author of one sonnet deliberately borrowed and altered this verse from the other. After all, a version of the previous sonnet also appears in the manuscript Udine 10.

The rest of the opening two quatrains is dedicated to the description of the old woman, and the portrait therein recollects numerous other texts dealing with *vituperium in vetulam*. In it, the writer hopes to see her as a wrinkled, hairy, balding, toothless and hunchbacked woman (vv. 2–3). She should be covered in spider webs and complain constantly (v. 3). She also acts as the source of evil in the world since both God and her family hate her and she lives in poverty (vv. 5–7). Yet one statement in particular stands out. In the eighth verse, the poet describes the woman as enveloped in a small pelt (“*pelinzonçelo*”). While it may be a mere reference to her clothing, the word pelt (“*pelliccione*”)⁵¹ had a sexual connotation in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries; it frequently connoted the vulva.⁵² In other words, the poet seems to say that this old woman inhabits – literally, is wrapped up in – her genitals. As with the previous sonnet, the old woman, while repulsive, is also presented as sexualized. There is a combination of attraction and repulsion in the portrayal of her.

At the end of the first quatrain, the poet portrays her as being on display on a platform for all in her neighborhood to see (v. 4). This statement seems to establish an intertextual relationship, this time with a great work of literature; the fourth verse apparently recalls the fate of the widow in Giovanni Boccaccio’s *Decameron* 8.7. It should be noted that Boccaccio’s narrative constitutes one of the instances in which the term pelt (“*pelliccione*”) connoted female genitals.⁵³ In that tale, a young, noble scholar, who had been mistreated by a widow, pun-

⁵⁰ Emilio Pasquini, “Il ‘secolo senza poesia’ e il crocevia di Burchiello,” *Le botteghe della poesia: studi sul Tre-Quattrocento italiano* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1991), 25–86; here 56.

⁵¹ Note: the lexeme as it appears in the sonnet (“*pelinzonçelo*”) demonstrates traces of a Northern Italian dialect and has a diminutive suffix attached.

⁵² Valter Boggione and Giovanni Casalegno, *Dizionario storico del lessico erotico italiano. Metafore, eufemismi, oscenità, doppi sensi, parole dotte e parole basse in otto secoli di letteratura italiana*, 393–94, par. 3.1.4. References to the term *pelliccione* used sexually can be found in Rustico Filippi’s sonnet “Io fo ben boto a Dio: se Ghigo fosse” (“I make an oath to God: if Ghigo was”), and in Boccaccio’s *Decameron* 5.10; 8.7; and 10.10.

⁵³ The passage from *Decameron* 8.7 reads as follows: “Certo io confesso che essi [gli uomini giovani] con maggior forza scuotano i *pilliccioni*, ma gli attempati, sì come esperti, sanno meglio i luoghi dove stanno le pulci [...]” (“But whereas I admit that he will shake your *skin-coat* [i.e., pelt] with greater vigor, the older man, being more experienced, has a better idea of where the fleas are lurking,” l. 103; emphases added). Boccaccio’s *Decameron* is cited from Giovanni Boccaccio, *Decameron*, ed., Vittore Branca (Torino: Einaudi, 1980). The translation of the *Decameron* is cited from Giovanni Boccaccio, *The Decameron*, trans. G. H. McWilliam (London: Penguin, 1972).

ishes her by tricking her into climbing atop a tower very early in the morning and taking off her clothing, removing the ladder, and abandoning her there to be burned by the sun throughout the day. Boccaccio's language resembles much of the poetry about punishing old women. He writes:

Il sole, il quale era ferventissimo essendo già al mezzogiorno salito, feriva alla scoperta e al diritto sopra il tenero e dilicato corpo di costei e sopra la sua testa, da niuna cosa coperta, con tanta forza, che non solamente le cosse le carni tanto quanto ne vedea ma quelle minuto minuto tutte l'aperse [...] E oltre a questo, non faccendo punto di vento, v'erano mosche e tafani in grandissima quantità abbondati, li quali, pognendolesi sopra le carni aperte, sì fieramente la stimolavano, che ciascuna le pareva una puntura d'uno spuntone: per che ella di menare le mani attorno non restava niente, sé, la sua vita, il suo amante e lo scolare sempre maladicendo. (8.7: ll. 113, 116)

[The sun was positively blazing, and having reached its zenith, was beating freely down, with all its power, straight on to her soft and tender body and on to her unprotected head, so that not only did it scorch every part of her flesh that was exposed to its rays, but it also caused her skin to split into countless tiny cracks and fissures [...] But apart from this, there being not a breath of wind, the air was literally teeming with flies and gadflies, which, settling in the fissures of her flesh, stung her so ferociously that every sting was like a spear thrust into her body. And hence she flailed her arms in all directions, heaping a constant stream of curses upon herself, her life, her lover, and the scholar.]

Aspects of Boccaccio's tale seem echoed by the first sonnet that was examined above. In that sonnet, insects are part of her torment, and her suffering is treated as just retribution. Unlike that poem, though, Boccaccio's work is explicit in drawing the connection between the scholar's love and his subsequent violence meted out against the woman. The protagonist of *Decameron* 8.7 had been enamored of the widow and had been the butt of several of her pranks.

The intertextuality of the second sonnet with the *Decameron* does not constitute mere theatrics on the part of the poet, but rather coincides nicely with the poem's overall signification. In the tercets, the lyric ceases speaking about the old woman's negative attributes and changes direction. It now delves into an extended *ubi sunt*, asking about her lost beauty. The anonymous sonnet stands in stark contrast to the prevalent thematics of love poetry that put the exalted woman on a pedestal.⁵⁴ The poet wonders about the disappearance of the woman's golden tresses (v. 9), youth (v. 11), eyes (v. 12), gentle words and actions (v. 14).

⁵⁴ Katharina M. Wilson and Elizabeth M. Makowski, *Wykced Wyves and the Woes of Marriage: Misogamous Literature from Juvenal to Chaucer* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1990), 2

All of these traits, the poet makes clear, caused him to fall in love with her (v. 10; v. 13), and they are counterpoised to her current hideousness, as described in the two quatrains. The sonnet appears to accord with Hugh of Fouilloy's assertion that those women who do not die young will no longer be pleasing to those who love them; Hugh asks sarcastically why any man should subject himself to inevitable suffering by falling in love.⁵⁵ Like many other misogynistic texts throughout the centuries, this one too seems to function as a type of *dissuasio amoris* for its male readers.

In conclusion, scholarship has recently begun examining notions of filth and disgust from a cultural and historical perspective. The epigraph to this study indicates that filth should be considered distinct from dirt; dirt is mere earth, but to have filth one must have a culturally-determined system of conceptualizing what is acceptable. Filth is whatever violates that system. In the poems of *vituperium in vetulam*, the old woman is, by her very nature, the violation of the social norms and ethical teachings. She is not male, nor is she a young woman whom men find attractive, nor is she a potential mother. She is a woman who has outlived her reproductive capabilities, and whose appearance repels men; she is a mere body, nothing more than the producer of repugnant fluids and odors.

She is, in short, the living embodiment of the literal and moral filth that right-thinking men should reject. And yet, as in much of the literature of *vituperium in vetulam* she constitutes a sexual temptation. In the first sonnet, the poet wishes for her destruction, and in the second, the writer laments her lost beauty. In both poems, she symbolizes the temptation of the pleasures of the body in various ways. The poets' descriptions of her correspond to her symbolic function as the dissuasion from desires.

In his study *The Anatomy of Disgust*, William Ian Miller notes that disgust lies at the nexus between the physical and the ethical in that it is central to moral discourse and the construction of moral sensibilities.⁵⁶ Disgust reinforces the social system through abhorrence of its infractions. In other words, disgust of the repulsive, whether actual filth or morally repugnant people, serves a type of hygienic purpose encapsulated in the modern-day expression "clean living." Men should reject earthly pleasures the pursuit of which literally results in the production of vileness. The embrace of chastity is, in effect, a hygienic urge. The texts of *vituperium in vetulam*, with their repellent descriptions of the filthy old woman,

55 Cited from Marie-Thérèse d'Alverny, "Comment les théologiens et les philosophes voient la femme," *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale* 20 (1977): 105–209; here 126.

56 William Ian Miller, *The Anatomy of Disgust* (see note 10), 178.

taught medieval (male) readers about the proper relationship to women, to sex, and ultimately to the body.

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Appendix

A. Parma Palatino 1081 (f. 103r)

Veder ti possa io vecchia stomachosa
 nuda in le braccia a 600 leoni
 a orsi tigri leopardi e draghoni
 che al mio parer ti faccin dollarosa

 in chorpo avestu femina noiosa
 bisce ranocchi vespe et chalabroni
 rospi sanghuette tafani e moschoni
 che t affoghassen porcha fastidiosa

 Pasto da lupi da chorve e da chornacchie
 ghazze e ghiandaie ti beccchin le cervella
 li nibbi li avoltori elle mulacchie

 al sol la vista strassen le budella
 luni ti pilucchi e altro tabacchie
 i vermi fuori tragghan le chorachelle

 anchor ti naschan mille vermiciani
 che sempre abai chom fan li chani

 [I wish I could see you, disgusting old woman,
 nude in the arms of six hundred lions,
 of bears, tigers, leopards, and dragons,
 who, in my opinion, cause you pain;

 may you have in your body, annoying woman,
 asps, frogs, wasps, and hornets,
 toads, leeches, gadflies, and bottle flies;
 may they drown you, annoying sow.

A meal for wolves, for crows, for ravens –
 may magpies and jays pick at your brains,
 and may buzzards, vultures and hooded crows
 spread your guts out for the eyes of the sun,
 may one pluck you and the other bludgeon you,
 and may worms pull out your innards
 and still may you give birth to a thousand dog-worms
 so that you'll always howl as dogs do.]

B Reginense Latini 1973 (f. 98v)

Veder te possa vechia fastidiosa
 in brazo e nuda a secento leonj
 e tigri ursi leopardj e dragionj
 a me piazer te fanno doloroxa
 pasto da lovi vechia faticosa
 da bisse e da ranocchj e da scorpionj
 mosche vespe tavani e chalavroni
 avestu in corpo vechia noiosa
 Becchin te possa i corbi e le cornachie
 ghaze e pivani ischole ceruela
 prupi e avoltori con le monachie

[the manuscript folio is damaged at this point]

[I wish I could see you, annoying old woman,
 in the arms – and nude – of six hundred lions,
 of tigers, bears, leopards, and dragons,
 who, for my pleasure, cause you pain;

A meal for wolves, tiring old woman,
 may you have in your body, annoying old woman,
 asps, and frogs, and scorpions,
 flies, wasps, gadflies, and bottle flies,

may crows and ravens,
 magpies and buzzards pull out your brains,
 and vultures and kites and hooded crows]

[the manuscript folio is damaged at this point]

C Udine 10 (f. 188v)

Veder ti possa vecchia rabiosa
 nuda tra bracci, et orsi, e tra leoni,
 fra tigri, e cani, vipere e dragoni,
 che a mio voler ti facian dolorosa.

Pasto da lupi vecchia stomacosa:
da bisse: e da cornachie: e scorpioni:
mosche: tavani: vespe: e gralavoni:
in corpo havessi femina nogliosa.

Becchar ti possa i corvi e le cornachie,
gaze poiane gli occhi e le cervelle
lun ti speluchia e laltro ti baccachie.

Al sol distessa havesti le budelle:
anchor ti nasca mille vermicani
che sempre latri come fa li cani.

FINIS

[I wish I could see you, angry old woman,
nude among hunting dogs, and wolves, and lions,
among tigers and dogs, vipers and dragons,
who, for my desire, cause you pain;

A meal for wolves, disgusting old woman,
may you have in your body, annoying woman,
asps, and ravens, and scorpions,
flies, wasps, gadflies and bottle flies,

may crows and ravens,
magpies and buzzards pick at your brains and eyes,
may one pluck you and the other bludgeon you,

And may you have your guts spread out.
and still may you give birth to a thousand dog-worms
so that you'll always bark as dogs do.

END]

Scott L. Taylor

Si Odore Solo Locus Pestilentiosus Fiat: Private Property, Public Health and Environmental Hygiene – Advantages of the English Common Law of Nuisance over the Corpus Juris Civilis

The thirteenth-century clerical compiler, Étienne de Bourbon, in his extensive compendium of exempla, tells the story of the lawyer of a certain bishop who owned a home next to the water on which were located mills, to which the bishop seldom came. The lawyer censured the said home, complaining that he was able neither to rest nor to sleep there, due to the noise and tumult of the mills and the water. But when the bishop had given the lawyer that home which he had previously dismissed as unsuitable, he himself expanded the mills, resting as comfortably there as elsewhere; and to him, the noise seemed most sweet from the time the mills were made his, on account of the profits.¹

The tale is, of course, the medieval equivalent of the one about the pig farmer, selling his livestock to the big-city operator of a slaughter house, who complains to him of the unbearable stench of the animals; and as the city slicker counts the money into the farmer's hands, the farmer thumbs the currency saying, "That may be, but they sure smell sweet to me."

Étienne's purpose in relating this anecdote perhaps is unrelated to our theme today. Yet, it does manifest a recognition of the fundamental fact that human beings vary in their tolerance of environmental noxiousness, and that such variance is related not only to their personal capacities and inclinations, but to their socio-economic circumstances. It is this difference among individuals that

¹ "Similes sunt cuidam advocato cuiusdam episcopo: qui cum haberet quamdam mansionem juxta aquam in qua errant moendina, ad quam aliquando raro veniebat dictus episcopus, conquerebatur dictus advocatus, dicens quod non poterat ibi vel quiescere vel domire, propter strepitum et tumultum moendini et aque, vituperans episcopo habitacionem dicti manerii. Cum autem episcopus dedisset dicto advocato manerium predictum tanquam ineptum, ipse amplians moendina, dulcius requiescebat ibi quam alibi, et vicebatur ei strepitus dulcissimus ex quo facta sua fuerant moendina dicta, propter lucrum." Étienne de Bourbon, *Anecdotes historique, légendes et apollogues*, ed. A. Lecoy de la Marche (Paris: Librairie Renouard, 1877), No. 438, 379–80.

Scott L. Taylor, Pima Community College, Tucson

is likely to cause conflict over environmental conditions where the parties hold interests in realty that if not contiguous, is at least *vicinalis*. In the Middle Ages, so long as the claimants were not freeholders, their competing interests were subject to balancing by their lord. But as smaller freeholds proliferated, not only in closer proximity, but with assorted claims of customary and/or implied easements, commons and communities, the potential for unresolved conflict escalated. This paper addresses how authorities through law sought to resolve those conflicts as they related to hygiene, whether odors, waste, or refuse.

Both on the continent, and by way of indirection as we will discuss momentarily, in England, resolution of disputes over possession and use of realty must begin with the *Codex Justinianus*, which with the advent of printing publishers dubbed the *Corpus Juris Civilis*. On the continent, this body of Roman law was deemed the *ius commune*. But even in England where its use and dissemination was barred by the Angevins, it retained currency through its extensive incorporation into the canon law by Gratian. Thus, whether by way of the civil law, or through the detour of ecclesiastic regime, the English system of writs adopted aspects of Roman law as well, in such disguised innovations as novel disseisin, essentially the English equivalent of the interdict *Unde vi*. The majority of these interdicts or actions *extra ordinem* in lieu of interdicts in private law were concerned with vindication of possession or use against unlawful interference under varying circumstances.

The interdicts against *vi* and *vi armata* had been combined by Justinian's day into the singular interdict *Unde vi*, which was historically perhaps the most important of these injunctions, protecting lawful possessors against forcible dispossession regardless of the ultimate issue of title by mandating that lawful possession would be determined before ownership. However, interdicts also lay for interference with public ways and places. But again, such interference was generally of a nature depriving one of the use of such public benefit. As Nerva would opine, such relief would not lie where the action of which the plaintiff complained made a public place or way unhealthy only on account of noxious odors.² There also lay

² [Nerva] “ait, si odore solo locus pestilentiosus fiat, non esse ab re de re ea interdicto uti,” *Digesta Justitiani [Digesta]* 43.8.2. It is obvious that the great Huguenot jurist and editor of the *Corpus Juris Civilis*, Denis Godefroy (1549–1622), felt somewhat uncomfortable with this opinion by Nerva. He suggests that it certainly could not pertain to public places, though he is unable to assert any authority for that position. He cites authors from Seneca to Marsilius of Ficino regarding the importance of air quality to human health. He emphasizes that the unhealthy consequences must be due solely to the odors – although given the state of medicine contemporary both with the opinion and with the gloss, that limitation is arguably *de minimis*. He also suggests that the Florentina contained some provisions which dealt at least with smoke and feces, which

an interdict to prohibit interference with anyone cleaning *cloacas* or undertaking to connect a private *cloaca* with the public *cloaca*, because “ad salubritatem civitatum et ad tutelam pertinent.”³ But no interdict existed to protect against private or public annoyance, whether such annoyance bore a public or private health consequence or not.

Perhaps this should not be entirely surprising. Roman law presupposed an on-going process of legislation and administrative regulation to protect the public weal. And for the most part, competent Roman magistrates and innovative Roman engineering provided both an adequate regime and sophisticated infrastructure to construct and maintain a hygienic environment by pre-modern standards. With the decline of the Empire, however, the same could not always be said for the successor Barbarian kingdoms. Even where pre-existing infrastructure may have been inherited, disuse and deterioration over time rendered many public works inadequate or dysfunctional, or simply derelict and abandoned due to settlement shift or fragmentation, as at London, Tours, Limoges, Jublain, and Metz.⁴ In rural, depopulated or under-populated areas, this proved a minimal obstacle to governance, and seigniorial prerogatives provided adequate resolution of competing claims.

With renewed urbanization, however, with its free tenements in close propinquity, the inadequacy of infrastructure and the sparseness of legal regime were bound to lead to conflict among inhabitants of cities and towns. Kings, lords and municipal authorities issued regulations on a more or less ad hoc basis, having the hallmarks of a largely complaint-driven regime. In some cases, fishermen complained that the butchers were fouling their river by dumping entrails and other waste of their profession, and statutes were adopted forbidding the practice,⁵ thereby only encouraging renewed dumping in the streets, as was the

could have provided some basis for arguing applicability of the interdict. Were this the case, they obviously did not find their way into the *Codex Justinianus* as transcribed and taught in the twelfth-century legal palingenesis, and which became the foundation of the civil law, else Godefroy, given his discomfort and his scholarship, would have found such authority. See *Corpus juris civilis, in IV. partes distinctum. eruditissimis Dionysii Gothofredi I. C. clarissimi notis illustratum* (1583; Lyons: Phillipus Borde & Laurentius Arnaud, 1662), ca. 1549–1550, notes t–y.

³ *Digesta* (see note 2), 43.23.1.

⁴ On Metz and generally, see Guy Halsall, “Towns, Societies and Ideas: The Not-so-strange Case of Late Roman and Early Merovingian Metz,” *Towns in Transition: Urban Evolution in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, ed. N. Christie and S. T. Loseby Aldershot (Brookfield, VT, Singapore, and Sydney: Ashgate, 1996), 233–61.

⁵ Although, even where municipal regimes existed, compliance could vary widely over time. An interesting example is provided by the 1403 petition to the King’s Council of Richard Fournays, Keeper of the River Foss in York, alleging that tenements within the franchise of the city which

standard practice in many municipalities, or next to the city walls, increasing the stench within the town as a whole.

Perhaps worse, efforts to keep noxious occupations such as butchers, tanners, or even fishmongers, outside the city walls often fell afoul – no pun intended – of the rapid expansion of urban populations that expanded the limits of the city, and resulted in a multiplicity of foul districts within the municipality rather than just one. Additionally, economic realities and the limits of transportation demanded that markets and artisans be only so far removed from the populations they served without causing hardship to business owners, employees and consumers alike. Besides, there was frequently no consensus on the most desirable alternatives to what were manifestly inadequate conditions. For example, in London, all public latrines and most private latrines were constructed over either the Thames, the Fleet or the Walbrook. Those that were not were built over cesspools that were periodically cleaned out by privy-cleaners and dumped on the banks of the Thames, where muckrakers would load waste onto barges and transport it to agricultural areas for fertilizer.

Between 1345 and 1347, however, discharge into the rivers or streams was forbidden, as was dumping into or along the Thames. Yet, by 1374 it was again permitted to discharge latrines into the Walbrook, so long as no other waste was

abutted on the Foss had always had to take certain measures to keep the rubbish from their houses from getting into the water, but that lately, in the time of King Richard, these measures had completely broken down. He requested suitable commandments under the king's great seal, addressed to the Mayor and Sheriffs of the city, ordering them to correct these faults swiftly, on pain of a heavy penalty to be decided by the council, and also a suitable penalty, again to be decided by the council, for those within the precinct of the city who did not obey these commands. On the fifth day of June in the fourth year of the reign of Henry IV (i.e., 1403) at Westminster present in the council the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Chancellor, the Treasurer, the Bishop of Rochester, the Keeper of the Privy Seal, the Lords Roos, Wilughby and Louvel, and lords T. Erpyngham, J. Cheyne, and A. Savage, it was agreed and assented that a writ under the great seal should be sent to the Mayor and Sheriffs of the city of York, setting out the claim made here, and that, on pain of £300, they are to make such an ordinance, between now and Michaelmas next, that the faults specified within might be corrected and redressed. And if anyone should wish to disobey or contravene such an ordinance, the aforesaid Mayor and Sheriffs are to inform the council of the names of such disobedient people, so that such punishment can be given to them as seems best to the council, according to their advice and discretion. Calendar of Close Rolls, Hen IV, vol. II, 1402–1405 pp. 84–85 (writ to Mayor and Sheriffs of York to correct the faults mentioned in the petition). Apparently, the relief was inadequate, since a subsequent order was issued at Gloucester, 5 November 1407. Calendar of Close Rolls, Hen IV, vol. III, 1405–1409 p. 297 (order to the Mayor and Sheriffs of York to issue a proclamation forbidding people from putting rubbish into the River Foss).

deposited. In the fifteenth century, the practice was once again enjoined.⁶ The reason for the prohibitions is not difficult to understand, particularly when one recalls that the waters of these rivers and streams was used for cooking and cleaning. It was reported as late as 1598 by German travelers, that those who washed their clothes in the Thames waters bore a distinctive and unpleasant odor.⁷ On the other hand, waste must be deposited somewhere. In some Italian cities, such as Ferrara, it was mandated that butchers locate along the city's streams wherein they should dump their offal, thus substituting one problem of environmental hygiene for another.⁸

In the fourteenth century, regulations designed to improve environmental quality began to gain momentum. By the early 1300s, virtually all cities prohibited the dumping of waste from the overhanging upper stories of town dwellings as had been common in the earlier Middle Ages. However, the practice never ceased entirely, and escalated in periods of crisis. Edward III complained of the practice in 1349, lamenting that waste was being thrown night and day, and that the streets of London were rife with feces, echoing his complaint against York seventeen years earlier, abjuring the mayor and bailiffs of the city to clean the streets and lanes before St. Andrew's next for the health of the inhabitants and of the participants of the upcoming parliament. Disposing of waste in the streets was generally forbidden by ordinance under penalty of fine.

With the advent of the plague in mid-century, legislation reached a certain fever pitch. University-trained physicians, sometimes in *consilia* requested by city authorities, cautioned *inter alia* of environmental pollutions that could contribute to the feared miasma.⁹ Gentile da Foligno in his *consilia* to the council of

⁶ On the volatile history of sanitation regulations governing waste disposal in Medieval London, see generally Craig Taylor, "The Disposal of Human Waste: A Comparison Between Ancient Rome and Medieval London," *Past Imperfect* 11 (2005): 53–72.

⁷ Paul Hentzner, *Itinerarium Germaniae, Galliae, Angliae, Italiae, cum indice locorum, rerum atque verborum memorabilium* (Nuremberg: Abraham Wagenmann, 1612). On the general history of London's medieval water woes and engineering projects of the *Frühneuzeit*, see the useful article by civil engineer Roger D. Hansen, "Water-Related Infrastructure in Medieval London," online at: *WaterHistory*, <http://www.waterhistory.org/histories/london/> (last accessed on June 24, 2016).

⁸ David Nicholas, *The Later Medieval City, 1300 –1500. A History of Urban Society in Europe* (New York: Addison Wesley Longman, 1997), 331.

⁹ On these *consilia* and the practitioners who authored them, see generally Jon Arrizabalaga, "Facing the Black Death: perceptions and reactions of university medical practitioners," *Practical Medicine from Salerno to the Black Death*, eds. Luis García-Ballester, Roger French, Jon Arrizabalaga, and Andrew Cunningham (Cambridge: University of Cambridge, 1994), 237–88.

Perugia recommended that to remove the stench from homes and public spaces, fires should be set in the streets to fumigate the city at large.¹⁰

The Catalan physician Jacme d'Agramont in his *Regiment de preservació de pestilència*, written as an epistle to the councilors of Lerida, attributed pestilence in some part at least to the *sutzea*, or dirtiness, and recommended that (1) entrails and refuse of beasts and dead animals should not be discarded near the town; (2) manure heaps should not be piled next to the city; (3) deposit or throwing of excrements inside the town should be enjoined whether during the day or at night; (4) skins for soaking and tanning should not be retained within city limits; (5) slaughtering of animals should not be permitted within the town.¹¹ He also touted the purifying effects of fumigation.¹² Such opinions were not without influence, and many cities adopted some or all these suggestions, as well as numerous other regulations.

However, these and a multitude of other rules were largely ignored, in part because the fines were low enough that those with sufficient resources were willing to pay them, in part because likelihood of apprehension was minimal. In some cities, hard-pressed authorities lacking resources for detection resorted to paying neighbors to inform on one another. Furthermore, since such rules were criminal, they frequently demanded proof of *mens rea*, and perhaps more significantly, they were often capable of technical circumvention. Finally, as in prior centuries, not only enforcement but legislative innovation was largely complaint driven, and the concerns of a neighborhood were bound to receive more attention from the pertinent authorities than isolated pleas. For example, in 1330 Barcelona, neighborhood complaints over the *fetores* from uncontrolled drains, sewers, and latrines emerging from the Jewish quarter into open air through a hole in the old wall impelled the *veguer* to block the aperture because of the threat to the *publicam valitudinem*.¹³ Despite the *veguer*'s conclusion that the stink arising from the

¹⁰ "... unum debet fieri quod toti populo est utile facere ignem accendi in stratis cum emundatione omnium fetorum domorum et civitatum." *Consilium contra pestilentiam* (Colle di Valdelsa, ca. 1479) signats. a3v–a4v.

¹¹ 'Regiment de preservació de pestilència' de Jacme d'Agramont (s. XIV). *Introducció, transcripció i estudi lingüístic*, ed. J. Veny i Clar (Tarragona: Publicaciones De La Excelentísima Diputación Provincial 1971), 47–93, here at 78–80.

¹² 'Regiment de preservació de pestilència' (see note 11), 79–80.

¹³ "[Judei] fecissent cloacas, alblones et latrinas in eorum hospitiis ... ex quibus comitebantur fetores per quoddam foramen muri veteris ipsius civitatis ad carreriam publicam ... necminus infectio veris propterea emergebat ex quo possent infirmitates nodum in ipso covicinio, immo alibi in pluribus civitatis eiusdem vigere." Archivo de la Corona de Aragón (Barcelona), Reg. 437, fol. 1015, quoted and discussed in Luis García-Ballester, *La medicina medieval a València*. De-

unrestrained flow of sewage created an infection that could cause diseases not only in the adjoining neighborhood but throughout the city, it is questionable whether action would have been taken had there been scarce complaint.

Quite simply, in the absence of any recognized principle of law under the civil régime engendering a justiciable controversy in consideration of the premises, relief required recourse to political authorities empowered to issue new laws, which as suggested above, could have unintended negative consequences, or more often, *ad hoc* edicts or regulations, providing no basis for redress of the grievances of those affected by actions or actors outside the immediate context.

Which brings us to the relative advantages of the English law of nuisance.¹⁴ As already stated, the writ of novel disseisin (literally, recent dispossession)

scrobrim el País Valencià, 29 (Valencia: Institució Valenciana d'Estudis i Investigació, Edicions Alfons el Magnànim, 1988), 104, and J. Arrizabalaga, "Facing the Black Death" (see note 9), 276.

14 At this point we are concerned with private rather than public nuisance, i.e., those situations wherein the plaintiff complains of a fact done *ad nocum entum liberi tenement sui*, and seeking a writ directing the sheriff to summon an assize, or jury, to inspect the premises and have them at the next commission of assizes, that justice might be rendered by an order of abatement, damages, etc. Public nuisance actually appears to date as early as the twelfth century, as a criminal plea of the crown, dealing primarily with purprestures, particularly of roads and waterways. As such, its roots lie more in criminal law than in tort law. See, e.g., William L. Prosser, "Private Action for Public Nuisance," *Virginia Law Review* 52 (1966): 997–1027. However, it is obvious that nuisances may be mixed, i.e., they may represent both a public harm and inconvenience, and a harm and inconvenience to specific individuals where they suffered injury transcending that experienced by the public at large, though there is debate over whether this rule is largely a creature of Lord Coke's 1628 *Commentary on Littleton*, and his discussion of Anon, Y.B. Mich. 27 Hen. 8, f.27, p1. 10 (1535). See William A. McRae Jr., "The Development of Nuisance in the Early Common Law," *University of Florida Law Review* 1 (1948): 27–48. While the distinction between public and private nuisance is related to that between criminal and tort actions, it should also be remembered that historically, while in the twelfth century we do see nascent efforts by Glanvill and Bracton to conceptually distinguish crime and tort, as a practical matter every tort or civil cause of action was in principle a punishable offense, as was every falsehood, default in appearance, or mispleading in the course of that civil cause of action. See Frederick Pollock and Frederic William Maitland, *The History of English Law Before the Time of Edward I*, 2nd ed., 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1898), 2:519. Naturally, insofar as these matters constituted offenses, most would have been punished as minor offenses by amercement. Thus, a tort action for nuisance if successful would likely have ended in abatement and a fine; while a successful action for criminal public nuisance brought by presentment would have ended likewise, with an order of abatement and a fine, at least presuming no direct and immediate felonious offense to the crown. The more important distinction was not between crime and tort, but between felony and *transgressio*, for, as Bracton observes, "... erit distinguendum quale sit factum de quo proponitur appellum, utrum scilicet sit ibi feloniam vel transgression, quia quaelibet transgression dici non debet feloniam, quamvis e converso. [...] it is to be distinguished whether the deed of which the

established in the reign of Henry II (1154–1189) was in effect the Roman or canon interdict *Unde vi* with some procedural niceties concerning summonses and juries that characterized Henry's legal reforms. It dealt, therefore, with recent (i.e., within one year) dispossession of land with which the complainant was in seisin, or lawful possession. It is questionable whether the writ could be used to protect holders of easements or profits, i.e., extraction prerogatives. Glanvill writing in the twelfth century was inclined to think of the early assize of nuisance as mere extension of novel disseisin.¹⁵

Bracton in the thirteenth century viewed the assize as an entirely separate form of action having the advantage not only of removing the offending condition and returning the land to its pristine condition, but permitting a single assize to determine multiple nuisances that could arise from a single action. Thus, in its first form, the assize of nuisance allowed the holder to bring action against a non-grantor for actions disrupting his use and enjoyment of his easement or profit. Not surprisingly therefore, nuisance was soon extended as well to interference with the use and enjoyment of freeholds generally, since it would have been preposterous that mere easements or profits should receive greater protection than freeholds, or that situations could arise by which recourse to separate assizes would be necessitated to resolve injuries arising out of a single act.¹⁶

accusation is propounded be a felony or a trespass (transgression), for a trespass ought not be called a felony, though the converse be true]. Henricus de Bracton, *De legibus et consuetudinibus Angliae*, henceforth simply Bracton, *De legibus*, Book 3, Treatise 2, Ch. III (f. 119b). Non-felonious wrongs could be punished in either of three ways: by civil action; upon presentment before local courts; or upon presentment before the king's justices. Pollock and Maitland, *The History of English Law*, 2:512. To exaggerate the differences between public and private nuisance during these formative centuries is perhaps, in the final analysis, anachronistic, given the blurred line between civil and criminal law and procedure. Cf. Scott L. Taylor, "Judicium Dei, vulgaris popularisque sensus: Survival of Customary Justice and Resistance to its Displacement by the 'New' Ordines iudiciorum as Evidenced by Francophonic Literature of the High Middle Ages," *Crime and Punishment in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Age: Mental-Historical Investigations of Basic Human Problems and Social Responses*, eds. Albrecht Classen and Connie Scarborough. Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture, 11 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2012), 109–30.

15 Ranulf de Glanvill, *Tractatus de legibus et consuetudinibus regni Anglie* [Glanvill] Book XIII, c. 33.

16 It is questionable whether this was fully accomplished in Bracton's time. True, some modern commentators point to Bracton's observation that "Est etiam constitution juris, ne quis faciat in suo injurioso, scilicet ne stagnum faciat vel exaltet, vel refluxum aquae submerget tenementum vicini sui." *De legibus* (see note 14), Book 4, Ch. XLIV(1) (f. 232), as recognition of a general law of nuisance. However, Bracton expounds at length on the difference between the two assizes, and that where a single act results in both disseisin and nuisance, adroit practice dictates a choice of

Much ink has been spilled both in the Middle Ages and in the modern era over the question of whether a separate action need have been established to countenance actions in nuisance, or whether they flowed naturally and unavoidably from novel disseisin.¹⁷ I would hazard to say that nothing in the writ of novel disseisin made the extension of the jurisdiction of royal courts over nuisance inevitable. Certainly, the continental civil law did not develop an equivalent action, nor did provincial courts. Philippe de Beaumanoir, *bailli* of county Clairmont in the thirteenth century, refers in Chapter 32 of the *Coutumes de Beauvaisis* to a royal statute, which has never been found,¹⁸ establishing new procedures of *force*, *nouvel dessaisine*, and *nouvel tourble*.¹⁹ The latter may be translated loosely as nuisance, as does Akehurst,²⁰ particularly as it speaks of peaceful possession being disturbed by interference with use without actual dispossession.

However, the examples provided by Philippe in his *coutumier*, i.e., removal of harvesters or work men, indicate clearly that *nouvel tourble* was directed specifically to interference with use, as opposed to use and enjoyment. Furthermore, there is no indication that such an action developed in Beauvaisis or elsewhere into a significant cause of action. Indeed, French law would develop nothing akin to nuisance until the court of Colmar announced the doctrine of *abus de droit* in 1855.²¹ Even then, the doctrine is generally applicable only in cases of bad faith or

action that can eliminate the offending conduct totally while obviating the burden of two assizes, *De legibus*, Book 4, Ch. XLV(10) (f. 234–35).

17 For example, cf. Robert Cheren, “Tragic Parlor Pigs and Comedic Rascally Rabbits: Why Common Law Nuisance Exceptions Refute Coase’s Economic Analysis of the Law,” *Case Western Reserve Law Review* 63 (2012): 556–598, and Frederick Pollock and Frederic William Maitland, *The History of English Law Before the Time of Edward I*, 2nd ed., 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1898), 2:53.

18 See Georges Hubrecht, *Commentaire historique et juridique*, published as volume 3 to the reprint of Philippe de Beaumanoir, *Coutumes de Beauvaisis*, ed. Am. Salmon (1899; Paris: A. et J. Picard, 1970–1974).

19 “Après ce que nous avons parlé de pluseurs mesfès et des cas de crime et d’autres et de la vengeance qui appartient a chascun mesfèt, il est bon que nous parlons en cest chapitre ci après d’autres manieres de mesfès seur lesqueus li rois a establi nouvele voie de justicier et nouvel venjance contre ceus qui les font. Et cil mesfèt de quoi nous voulons traitier sont devise en .III. manieres, c’est a savoir force, nouvele dessaisine et nouvel tourble.” Philippe de Beaumanoir, *Coutumes de Beauvaisis*, ed. Am. Salmon (1899; Paris: A. et J. Picard, 1970–1974), Chapter 32, par. 954, p. 485.

20 *The Coutumes de Beauvaisis of Philippe de Beaumanoir*, trans. F. R. P. Akehurst (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992).

21 Arrêt de Daerr, Cour de Colmar, 2 mai 1855, D.P., 1856, 2, 9. See generally, Laurent Eck, “Controverses constitutionnelles et abus de droit,” contribution réalisée pour le VIe congrès de l’association française de droit constitutionnel de Montpellier de juin 2005 dans l’atelier “les controverses constitutionnelles” dirigé par les Professeurs Anne-Marie Le Pourhiet et Stéphane

intentional harm without justification, and hence incorporates a notion of fault present generally in the Roman concept of *delict* but absent from common law nuisance. Thus, I submit that the English development of the assize of nuisance represents more than a perfunctory and logically necessary extension of novel disseisin.

Accordingly, the maxim developed in English law, *sic utere tuo ut alienum, non laedas*. While some modern jurists have discounted this adage as mere verbiage, in fact it manifests what is at least historically an important point. For particularly in the medieval era, the common law applicable to tortious conduct focused on causality, not fault, and damages – a concept but nascent in Bracton’s day, and innovative in its departure from the fixed schedules of payment known as *bót* – were deemed, in general, compensatory, not punitive, though as early as the reigns of Henry III (1216–1272) and Edward I (1272–1307), we see the Statutes of Merton (1235) and of Winchester I (1275) providing for multiple damages seemingly punitive in character.²² The issue in nuisance actions, therefore, was

Pierré-Caps, who while he points to those scholars who would attempt to find within various concepts of Roman law such as “aequitas,” the essence of *abus de droit*, e.g. Ursula Elsener, *Les racines romanistes de l’interdiction de l’abus de droit* (Brussels: Helbing & Lichtenhahn, 2004), 188; see also, Mila Jovanovic, “Aequitas and bona fides in the Legal Practice of Ancient Rome and the Prohibition of the Abuse of Rights,” *Facta Universitatis*, Series Law and Politics, vol. 1, n° 7, 2003, p. 763, nevertheless, there could be no real recognition of the concept in Roman law, given the notable absence of any notion of subjective law in its corpus, see, e.g., M. Villey, “Signification philosophique du droit romain,” *Archives de philosophie de droit* 26 (1981): 381 et s.; “La genèse du droit subjectif chez Guillaume d’Occam,” *Archives de philosophie de droit* 9 (1964): 97–127. Of course, this can give rise to the issue of whether English law, obviating the necessity to distinguish between *droit subjectif* and *droit objectif*, or *subjektives Recht* and *objektives Recht*, by referring to the former as “right,” the latter as “law,” may not reflect a substantive legal distinction of which we here are discussing one manifestation. Cf. Geoffrey Samuel, “Le Droit Subjectif and English Law,” *The Cambridge Law Journal* 46 (1983): 264–86. Of course, inherent in such argument is the old debate concerning Germanic versus Roman legal concepts and the implications thereof, see generally, Scott L. Taylor, “Political Theory in Medieval Studies,” *Handbook of Medieval Studies: Terms, Methods, Trends*, ed. Albrecht Classen. 3 vols. (New York and Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2012), vol. 2: 1111–22, as well as the significance of the increased Romanization of German law in the late Middle Ages, see Scott L. Taylor, “*Usos rerum rusticarum: Malae consuetudines, male usos lege* and Peasant Rebellion as Resistance or Adaptation to Legal Change,” *Rural Space in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Age: The Spatial Turn in Premodern Studies*, ed. Albrecht Classen. Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture, 9 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2012), 685–702; and “Law in Literature and Society,” *Handbook of Medieval Culture: Fundamental Aspects and Conditions of the European Middle Ages*, ed. Albrecht Classen, 3 vols. (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2015), vol. 2: 836–63.

²² See Pollock and Maitland, *The History of English Law* (see note 14), 2:522.

narrowed to whether the defendant had undertaken some action or maintained some condition on his land that caused an unreasonable interference in the use and/or enjoyment of the plaintiff's real property, including any appurtenances by way of easement or profit.

Hence, it may be a nuisance where a landowner acts in such a way as to alter the customary flow of a watercourse, so that it flows in a higher or a lower or a thinner or a more rapid stream than before, or whereby it is diminished in any way, or where it changes the bed of a stream to the inconvenience of a neighbor.²³ It may be a nuisance to overfill or construct ponds or even cut trees in such a manner as to cause run-off onto a neighboring property.²⁴ Indeed, according to Bracton, establishing a market that is neighboring another may be a nuisance,²⁵

23 "Si quis convictus fuerit per assisam que aquam diverterit vela liquid fecerit, vel immerserit per quod aqua pressior vel altior vel rarior fluat vel rapidior, vel per quod in aliquot minuatur, vel per quod alveum fluminis mutet cum incommode vicini." Bracton, *De legibus* (see note 14), Book 4, Ch. XLV.9 (f. 234 b).

24 "Est constitution juris, ne quis faciat in suo ijuriose, scilicet ne stagnum faciat vel exaltet, vel prosternat per quod noceri possit vicino, ut si per refluxum aquae submerget tenementum vicini sui. Eodem modo nec domum, nec pontem, stagnum, nec gurgitem exclusum nec molendinum, per quod vicino injuste noceatur, et sic ne faciat nocumentum injuriosum in construendo in proprio vel alieno, nec eodem modo prosternendo, demoliendo vel destruendo injuriose omnino quod juste factum est ab initio et levatum, ut si murum prostraverit quis, vel fossatum, piscariam vel stagnum exclusum, pontem, et hujusmodi." Bracton, *De legibus* (see note 14), Book 4, Ch. LXIV (f. 232 b).

25 This is, in fact, the subject of *De legibus* (see note 14), Book 4, Chapter XLVI (f. 235 a) wherein Bracton undertakes to explain when such competing franchises could represent a nuisance: Poterit inter alia nocumenta concede libertas ad nocumentum libertatis prius concessae, ut si cui concedatur libertas habendi mercatum aliquot loco certo, ita quod non sit ad nocumentum alicujus mercati vicini: et unde imprimis videndum quale non vicinum sive remotum. Item quale sit nocumentum, ad hoc quod sufficiat ad tollendum id quod nocet, si utrum damnosum sit et injuriosum, vel tantum damnosum et non injuriosum, qui remotum: vel damnosum et injuriosum, quia vicinum: vel si vicinum, non injuriosum, qui non ad damnum sed ad commodum. Vicinum autem dici poterit mercatum et nocumentum injuriosum, qui damnosum quandoque, ut sin ovum mercatum levatum sit infra sex leucas et dimidium et tertiam partem dimidiae. Et est ratio, secundum dicta seniorum, qui omnis rationabilis dieta constat et xx. Milliaribus. Dividatur dieta in tres partes, prim pars matutina detur euntibus versus mercatum, secunda vero detur ad emendum et vendendum, quae quidem sufficere debet omnibus nisi sint forte mercatores stellate, qui merces deposuerint et exposuerint venales, quibus necessaria erit prolixior mora in mercato. Tertia vero pars relinquitur redeuntibus de mercato ad propria, et quae quidem omnia necesse erit facere de die et non de nocte, proper insidias et incursum latronum, quod omnia sint in tuto. Cum igitur infra talem terminum impetretur mercatum, erit prosternendum: quianocumentum damnosum est et injuriosum, qui sic vicinum. Si autem ultra talem terminum, licet damnosum sit, non erit tamen injuriosum, qui remotum et non vicinum. Item poterit mercatum

and in 1220 a ferry owner succeeded in enjoining a rival operator on the doctrine of nuisance.²⁶ The extent of the principle raised some question regarding the nature of competition until *Hamelyn v. More* (1410) ruled that profit loss attributable to competition did not constitute nuisance and was not actionable, being merely *damnum absque injuria*.²⁷ It was clear, however, that the assize of nuisance could be used to protect holders of various riparian rights against not only diminution, but obstructions such as staking, or in some cases, polluting by dumping or discharge. And while it was widely recognized that the latter instances, particularly where odors resulted, was potentially injurious to health, proof of adverse health consequences was not required to maintain the action. A reduction in profit or even an unreasonable offense to aesthetic sense was sufficient *damnum*.²⁸

An interesting entry appears in the court rolls of Winchester, wherein a certain Juliana atte Floute complained that she was being obstructed in her use of a watercourse within the city known as Schuldwortstrete, today the Shulworth Street water course of the Kingsbrook stream, associated with workshops of the medieval era, to wash her clothes, yarn and thread.²⁹ An inquest was held on the oath of John Botman and twenty-three other jurors, who under oath determined that John de Titinger, and Henry de Colemere had indeed obstructed Juliana from the use of the watercourse, as a consequence of which she suffered damages of 6s. 8d. The jurors found the waterway to be common for the use of all, barring only the deposit of detritus from wood, hides being tanned or sheepskins, or the

esse vicinum infra praedictos terminus et non injuriosum, qui non damnosum set potius ad commodum, ut si illud de novo levatum sit secondo die vel tertio ad plus post diem alterius mercati. Si autem ante, segundo die vel tertio, erit injuriosum, quia damnosum. Et unde si mercatum non sit vicinum, non erit demolliendum, qui non injuriosum, licet damnosum. Si autem vicinum et infra terminum praedictum, si fuerit ad commodum, erit sustinendum propter verba, nisi sit ad nocumentum. Item si levatio unius sit ad nocumentum alterius, tunc videndum quem ipsorum primo levatum, et ideo licet ad nocumnetum, non tamen injuriosum quia primum. Item quamvis damnosum, non erit injuriosum, si de licentia querentis levatum sit.”

26 S. F.C. Milsom, *Introduction to Novae Narrationes*, ed. Elsie Shanks. Publications of the Selden Society 80 (London: B. Quaritch, 1963), lxxxviii–lxxxix (describing an “action ... for nuisance” in 1220 where “the owner of an established ferry complain[ed] of the opening of a new one.”

27 *Year Book* 11 Hen. 4, fol. 47, Hil. pl. 21 (1410); John Baker, Baker and Milsom: *Sources of English Legal History*, 2nd ed. (1986; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 671.

28 Discriminating between health and aesthetic concerns was and is no easy matter for the Middle Ages. See, e.g., N. J. Ciecieznski, “The Stench of Disease: Public Health and the Environment in Late-Medieval English Towns and Cities,” *Health, Culture and Society* 4.1 (2013): 92–104.

29 Hampshire Record Office, Winchester city archives, Borough court roll, transcribed in J(ohn) S(ampson) Furley, *Town Life in the Fourteenth Century as Seen in the Court Rolls of Winchester City* (Winchester: Warren & Sons, 1946), 134.

blood or waste of humans or animals, nor could one wash soiled infants' clothing there nor discharge privies or drains into that watercourse. The said John and Henry were therefore enjoined from interfering with the right of Juliana or anyone else from use of the waterway, except for the aforesaid prohibited uses. While the records are not entirely clear as to the legal theory employed, partially because it is uncertain exactly who Henry and John were, the course of the action is certainly not alien to nuisance, and is undoubtedly advised by the principles of that assize. Likewise, it is uncertain whether the prohibited uses of the waterway arose by custom, royal ordinance, prior assizes or municipal regulation. But that, too, is indicative of the fluid character of the assize of nuisance and its ability to engender future regulations as well as common law precedents.

Perhaps this is nowhere clearer than in the case of the London municipal system. The London Assize of Nuisance was technically a municipal regulatory authority. However, its procedures adopted the common law of nuisance that had already developed within the context of a more rural community. As suggested by Robert Cheren, the necessity for such procedure was compounded by the London Assize of Edifices, which encouraged closer construction by mandating shared-cost of party walls for urban construction, thereby increasing population density.³⁰ From a hygienic standpoint, it is not hard to understand the potential conflicts that could arise over waste disposal and privies, more often than not built into the common walls. The London Assize of Nuisance provided that upon the complaint of a land-owner, a formal assize consisting of the mayor and twelve elected aldermen would come to the site of the dispute, hear the complaint, view the premises, and issue an order resolving the conflict.

The recorded cases dealt with by the London assize run the gamut, often manifesting the ingenuity of urban denizens to provide for their hygiene, at the expense of others.³¹ For example, Alice Wade, unable to abide the stench of her own stool, rigged up her toilet to a rain gutter. Unfortunately, her waste blocked the gutter, resulting in irksome odors for the neighbors. The assize ordered her

³⁰ Robert D. Cheren, “Tragic Parlor Pigs and Comedic Rascally Rabbits: Why Common Law Nuisance Exceptions Refute Coase’s Economic Analysis of the Law,” *Case Western Reserve Law Review* 63.2 (2012): 556–98; here 560 – 62.

³¹ The records were originally published as *London Assize of Nuisance, 1301–1431: A Calendar*, ed. Helena M. Chew and William Kellaway (Leicester: London Record Society, 1973). They have been digitized and are available in searchable form at: <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/london-record-soc/vol10> (last accessed on June 24, 2016).

to disconnect her pipe within forty days.³² Henry de Ware provided himself with a window to ventilate his privy. Good for Henry, but not so pleasant for Isabel Luter, the neighboring widow lady, who complained the stench from his cesspool was infesting her habitation. Again, the defendant was ordered to remove the nuisance within forty days.³³

Cesspools were a frequent source of conflict. In 1301, William de Bethune complained that his neighbor William de Gartune's cesspool was penetrating into his cellar.³⁴ In 1306, on the complaint of Richer de Refham, John de Langeleye was ordered to move his cesspit even though it had been constructed forty years before, long predating the wall between the properties and any regulations on placement of cesspools, since the issue was nuisance, not violation of a building regulation.³⁵

Indeed, maintaining almost any condition upon the land that could contribute to unreasonably annoying or unhygienic conditions could be enjoined as nuisance, either public or private. For example, several cases complain of gates maintained by property owners that attract undesirable behavior. Entry 493 details a complaint of public nuisance wherein, *inter alia*, the plaintiffs maintained a great gate in the parish of St. Lawrence in Old Jewry, through which carts and horses with a variety of merchandise came and went upon the soil of the commonalty, so that access by the mayor and aldermen and other citizens to the Guildhall was gravely impeded, and the dung and other refuse which were thrown through the gate were an abomination to the common people passing along the road at night.

Case 494 details a complaint of nuisance by the commonalty against the master of the scholars of Balliolhalle, Oxford, rector of the church of St. Lawrence in Old Jewry, and his parishioners, complaining that they had a great gate in a stone wall which opened upon the soil of the commonalty, through which men living in the churchyard threw dung and other refuse, and made their privies there, which was an abomination to the mayor and aldermen and the common people passing along the street; and the access of the mayor and aldermen and

³² Case 214, Fri. 9 Aug. 1314. Nicholas de Farndon, mayor, John de Gisors, John de Wengrave, William de Leire, Richard de Gloucestre, Roger de Paris and John de Lincoln, aldermen and Robert Burdeyn and Hugh de Garton, sheriffs.

³³ Case 364, Fri. 13 July 1341. Andrew Aubrey, mayor, Henry Darcy, Roger de Depham, John Hamond, William de Causton, Richard Costantyn and Richard de Berkyn, aldermen.

³⁴ Case 2, Fri. 10 Feb. 1301. Elias Russel, mayor, Geoffrey de Nortone, Walter de Finchingfeld, William le Marezerer, Thomas Romeyn, John de Dunstable, Solomon le Coteler, John de Canterbury (Cantuaria), Simon de Paris, Hugh Pourte, Nicholas Pycot, aldermen.

³⁵ Case 96, Fri. 5 Aug. 1306. John le Blound, mayor, John de Wengrave, William de Leyre, Walter de Finchingfeld, John de Dunstable, Richer de Refham, Solomon le Cotiller, Hugh Pourte.

other citizens was frequently impeded by carts and horses passing through the gate with different kinds of merchandise.

In both cases, upon inspection the assize found the gates to be a nuisance, and ordered them blocked within forty days.³⁶ Naturally, in England as on the continent, the advent of the plague would generate significant legal activity, and indeed, scholars such as Robert C. Palmer make a major case for the transformation of English law, particularly the extension of old and creation of new causes of action in response to the Black Death.³⁷ Two of these developments are apposite to our consideration here. First, courts appear inclined in the post-1350 period to construe the elements of an action for trespass *vi et armis* in increasingly loose fashion. Palmer points, for example, to the butchers of Bury St. Edmunds who were found liable in the court of common pleas for improperly discarding animal intestines under the construction that the requisite “force” envisioned for the writ demanded merely affirmative action, as opposed to inaction, a mid-fourteenth-century trend echoed elsewhere, including London king’s bench.³⁸

The second development was emergence of “trespass on the case,” a sort of hybrid form of action allowing recovery for damages occasioned by the wrongful act of another unaccompanied by direct or immediate force, or which is the indirect or secondary consequence of defendant’s act, and is often considered a precursor to modern doctrines of actionable negligence. The former observation is interesting, since it suggests that rather than nuisance developing as a consequence of novel disseisin, in fact the action developed independently, and only later in the face of lax interpretation accompanying the plague did the basic action of trespass *vi et armis* reflect the significant overlap with nuisance observed in a later era. As to the second, Palmer himself concedes that the majority of early instances of trespass on the case would have been countenanced under the assize of nuisance.³⁹

The foregoing examples from the London Assize of nuisance demonstrate a certain effacement of the line between “tortious” private nuisance and “criminal”

³⁶ Both 493 and 494 were heard Fri. 19 Jan. 1358, John de Stodeye, mayor, Adam Fraunceys, Roger de Depham, William Welde, Simon de Worstede, Richard de Not [ingham], Simon Dolsely and Thomas Dolsely, aldermen, and Bartholomew de Frestlyngg and Stephen Cavendych, sheriffs.

³⁷ Robert C. Palmer, *English Law in the Age of the Black Death, 1348–1381: A Transformation of Governance and Law* (Chapel Hill, NC, and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1993).

³⁸ Palmer, *English Law* (see note 37), 164–65, and note 47.

³⁹ Palmer, *English Law* (see note 37 168–69, and note 2. See generally, Janet Loengard, “The Assize of Nuisance: Origins of an Action at Common Law,” *The Cambridge Law Journal* 37 (1978): 144–66.

nuisance.⁴⁰ The noxious smells emanating from one's latrine to the detriment of his immediate neighbor seems manifestly "private," while those cases brought on behalf of the commonalty clearly resound with the "public" weal. And indeed, this blurring may well have been more intentional than purely serendipitous. For while the machinery of presentment instituted by Henry II developed into a useful, albeit rather Byzantine, system of administering criminal law, as Pollock and Maitland observed, legislators of the period manifested:

... little faith in "communal accusation" or in any procedure that expects either royal officials or people in general to be active in bringing malefactors to justice. More was to be hoped from the man who had suffered. He would move if they made it worth his while. And so in a characteristically English fashion punishment was to be inflicted in the course of civil actions⁴¹

Here, the authors had in mind specifically the development of multiple damages as evidenced by the Statute of Merton (1235) in the reign of Henry III, or more by the Statute of Westminster I (1275) in that of Edward I. But to some extent, the development of actions for damages *in lieu* of the archaic schedule of fixed *bót*, as well as the emergence of damages supplemental to specific relief such as injunction or abatement, arguably reflect as well a mentality more confident in the self-interest of individuals than in public authority to suitably regulate the conduct of society, at least when it pertained to minor offenses and infringements.

English nuisance cases of the period generally demonstrate a flexibility to respond to complaints of unhygienic conditions that could not be countenanced under Roman law concepts of *delict*. Indeed, many are inherently subjective, which subjectivity is limited only by the great and amorphous legal fiction of "reasonableness," lest productive activity grind to a halt entirely in the presence of the hypersensitive. This, in turn, allowed many instances of unhygienic conditions to be dealt with on a case by case basis, without having to confront the economic and social costs associated with the unintended consequences of legislation.

While some scholars have suggested that the greater responsiveness of the English common law to environmental noxiousness was attributable to a greater concern for private realty, in fact, Roman law was more concerned with the absolute quality of private property, as well as being captive to a rigid procedural

⁴⁰ On which distinction and its problematic application to the period in question, see note 14, *supra*.

⁴¹ Pollock and Maitland, *The History of English Law* (see note 14), 2:522.

formulaic which represented a major drawback from the standpoint of practical public hygiene.

The more flexible and pragmatic procedures of the English common law, on the other hand, allowed for a more facile reconciliation of law and socio-economic context, and a greater allowance for not only health *per se* but aesthetic considerations under a pragmatic construction of “enjoyment.” The extent to which the common law framework made the English any cleaner as opposed to simply more litigious than other medieval people is open to debate. But certainly, the concept of nuisance provided a wider and more accessible forum for issues of hygiene.

Sarah Gordon

Mens Sana in Corpore Sanus: Water, Wellness, and Cleanliness in Five Fifteenth-Century Medical Manuals

This preliminary comparative study explores the use of water and organic ingredients in medical treatments found in four roughly contemporary unedited mid-fifteenth-century manuscripts now housed at the Huntington Library in San Marino, California: HM 58, 64, 1336, and 19079,¹ along with another fifteenth-century edited *Leechbook* (Medical Society of London MS 136, previously edited in 1934). An overview of the varied use of water and herbal water treatments in the five codices explored below will increase our overall understanding of fifteenth-century approaches to medicine, hygiene, and well being.²

Unfortunately, as is so often the case with insular and European codices in this period, the precise authorship and reception of these medical compilations remain unknown, they have multiple scribes, and the collections of medical recipes, diagnostic texts, and other materials have been added to over time. Nevertheless, these medical compilation books are an ideal selection for our purposes because they all have a broad scope and contain a wide range of medical, pharmaceutical, and other technical notes compiled over decades of the mid-fifteenth century from various sources, with texts ranging from herbal remedies to lists of symptoms to diagnostic tables, to vein man and urinalysis illustrations, to extensive prognostic astrological calendars.

¹ Transcriptions and translations from these Huntington Library manuscripts are my own. For some descriptions and catalog records, see Seymour De Ricci, *Census of Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts in the United States and Canada* (New York: ACLS, 1935–37), and R. Hanna, “The Index of Middle English Verse and Huntington Library Collections: A Checklist of Addenda,” *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 74 (1980): 235–58.

² Of course, there are earlier insular and continental medical texts, for example the Anglo-Norman surgery manual of Roger of Parma from ca. 1180, extant in a thirteenth-century manuscript, edited by Tony Hunt, *The Medieval Surgery* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell and Brewer, 1999); see also Hunt’s two-volume edition of several treatises, *Anglo-Norman Medicine* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell and Brewer, 1994 and 1997), an edition of several short treatises, including Roger Frugard’s *Chirurgia* and the *Practica Brevis of Platearius*, in which we find several earlier analogues to many of the treatments in the five later English manuscripts explored here.

Sarah Gordon, Utah State University, Logan

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Although the origin, reception, use, and provenance of these manuscripts differ somewhat (and remain for the most part uncertain or unknown), when read together they provide a useful sample or cross-section of mid-fifteenth-century medical commonplace books in England and France, and therefore paint a useful tableau of the role of water in practical medicine, personal hygiene, and notions of well being in the later Middle Ages.

Remarkably, all five manuscript compilations offer prescriptions for not only alleviating symptoms, but also for wellness, physical well being, and mental health.³ A survey of these five codices reveals that water plays an essential part in both wellness and preventative medicine in that period, as the select examples below demonstrate. These are two concepts not often popularly associated with medieval medicine, but prescriptive behaviors for wellness and prevention, such as drinking herbal waters, appear frequently in these treatises and therefore point scholars to look toward other contemporary medical commonplace books to expand our knowledge of wellness, prevention, and holistic medicine in the Middle Ages. As evinced by the studies in the present volume, hygiene and cleanliness may have been more important in health and prevention throughout the Middle Ages than previously thought.

Furthermore, in these five codices, many of the medicinal recipes or suggested behaviors are also concerned with preventative care, comfort, pain management, mental health, and general well being, not merely with the treatment of specific diseases or injuries. The four Huntington manuscripts are insular and multilingual (primarily Middle English, with sections in Latin, Old French, and Anglo-Norman) medical manuals containing several hundred recipes each, some with repetition and much variation, with surgical instructions, dietary and hygienic recommendations, herbals, texts on alchemy, toxicology, cosmology, prognoses calendars, charms, and a few common anatomical and diagnostic illustrations.⁴ Lengthy lists of symptoms or remedies are grouped together and are often repetitive, offering several options for different treatments for each symptom. In some cases it appears that variations on treatments are added by a later scribe at a later date. In most cases, it remains uncertain which of the treat-

³ See the essays on mental health and mental illness in a prior volume in this *Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture* series, also edited by Albrecht Classen, ed. *Mental Health, Spirituality, and Religion in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Age*. *Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture*, 15 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2014).

⁴ Cf. Susanna Niiranen, “Apothecary’s Art as a Contact Zone in Late Medieval Southern France,” *Multilingualism in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Age: Communication and Miscommunication in the Premodern World*, ed. Albrecht Classen. *Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture*, 17 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2016), 207–32.

ments had been attempted on previous patients, and which were effective, if any. HM 19079 is more organized in portions than the others, with pathologies from head to toe and related to humors, diagnostic symptoms, and potential oral or topical remedies, with a just few comments on effectiveness.⁵

In all five codices, the five senses are referred to as part of a patient's "wholeness," or wellness, and are described in terms of what the patient listens to, looks at, smells, eats or drinks, touches, washes, or applies topically. The healthy body/ healthy mind connection is drawn in several "doctors' orders" for behavioral modification, with the following common to all five commonplace books: avoiding sore feet because they make one feel bad; or avoiding overeating of fried foods or heavy meats because they cause indigestion; avoiding too much salted meat without drinking water; more washing or bathing to avoid discomfort; avoiding unpleasant noises; or avoiding the mere sight of blood and guts, stale or rotten foods; and perhaps most importantly, avoiding murky or cold water. Hot water, flowers, barks, herbs, minerals, and even rust are used in the medicinal balancing of humors, for pain management, or for their potential comforting or anti-septic qualities. All five mention washing, eating mustard, pepper, and drinking wine. Hydration, cleanliness, and clean water appear repetitively in all five manuscripts, no doubt because water plays a key role in humoral theory and in visible cleanliness.⁶

HM 19079 adds in addition to those the moderate drinking of wine, bathing and washing, clean water, good sleep, and pleasant colors and sounds, meant to improve the overall quality of life for the patient, whether ill or not. HM 64 f 22v also includes similar suggestions and promotes preventative medicine and wellness, described as living a "[w]hole life," including bathing regularly, particularly washing the hands and face for general hygiene and cleanliness, and presumably for overall disease prevention, being slightly more detailed than the now familiar "apple a day keeps the doctor away" adage:

To have the favours of mylke. The flavours of camemyll. And dryngke wyne meserably.
To ete sauge and notemyggi. Ofte wasshyng yowrshelfe of honde and face. If Meserabull

⁵ The sixteenth-century *Feldtbuch* corpus studied by Chiara Benati in the present volume also follows this common head-to-toe order, while other portions are seemingly randomly ordered, as she notes. Indeed, analogues with countless continental and insular medical commonplace books are apparent with many recipes or procedures listed in the Huntington manuscripts explored here. For a landmark but now somewhat dated overview of over 350 extant Middle English vernacular medical books, see Rossell Hope Robbins, "Medical Manuscripts in Middle English," *Speculum* 45.3 (1970): 393–415.

⁶ See also the contributions to this volume by David Tomíček and Thomas G. Benedek.

washe. Steppynge in tyme. Also to hyre melody precious noyse of songe of men and of chil-
dren ... the savours of redde roses. And to ete Electuari made with the rede roses ... to wesshe
you in colde ronyng water ... Slepe ofte. Wesshyng ofte of handis and of ffeete ... and amer
wyne and clene water.

[To have the benefits of milk. The flavors of chamomile. And drink wine measurably. To eat sage and nutmeg. Often washing yourself and hands and face. If miserable, wash. Stepping in thyme. Also to hear melody and the precious noise of song of men and children ... The savors of red roses. And to eat, electuary made with red roses. To wash yourself in cold running water. ... Sleep often. Washing often of hands and feet. And bitter wine and clean water.]

Running water was known at this time to be cleaner and healthier than stagnant or stored water, and appears in these five and other medical treatises that patients and practitioners should use running water, or boiled water, or water boiled with herbs, suggesting that clean water (or what would be known to be bacteria or parasite-free water today) was preferred by medical practitioners for treatment and also for daily health and well being. The above prescriptive statement, “If miserable, wash,” suggests washing and keeping hands and feet washed and clean, in addition to drinking clean water.

The essays by Albrecht Classen, Chiara Benati, Rosa Perez, and others in this volume have busted the myth of the filthy malodorous medieval person with an aversion to all bathing, of course. Since Galen and Aristotle, as we can see in this volume, hygiene and water are viewed essential to overall well-being and health, and on occasion important in the quest for Aristotelian *eudaimonia*. Aristotle deems cleanliness “a half-virtue,” referring to *salubritas*, to be understood as general health, wholesomeness, and cleanliness. Thus to be whole and to be healthy, one must also be clean, following Aristotle. Later, as we know from medieval humoral theory traditions, water was a moist humor, and if humoral fluids were in balance, then the patient was healthy.⁷ Doctors knew that discharges from various organs, from the eyes to the skin to the liver, were symptoms of trauma or illness, thus predating the discovery in much later centuries of bodily secretion immune responses.

It is useful to review the English terms repeated throughout these manuscripts: first, to be “[w]hole,” may mean healthy, well, or cured. Treatments aim to render the patient “whole.” In these manuscripts, the use of clean water, hot

⁷ See the introduction in the article by David Tomíček in the present volume for a discussion of humoral balance, as well as mentions of the humors and humorism throughout the present volume. Cf. also the contribution to this volume by Debra L. Stoudt.

water, or herb water appear over 320 times in total, and are the most common ingredients to “make man whole.”⁸

In English and French texts, “corruption,” what would be deemed infection today, is defined as imbalance that detracts from wholeness. Moreover, some recipes aim to balance the effects of “evils” on the “bodye and the brayne,” that is, to treat somatic pathologies and mental illness. Being balanced is often equated with becoming “[w]hole again,” akin to the notions of cure or treatment of “fallynge evylle” or “sekeness.” “Fallynge evylle” can also mean experiencing seizure, losing consciousness, or fainting, as it does in other commonplace books, of course. Evil has no moral connotation in contemporary manuals, and is merely a term for illness. Finally, sores, wounds, “festers,” “cankers,” and stones are all referred to as “maladie,” a term with a broad semantic field. Water alleviates “evil” and is shown to be a part of treatment in most of the symptoms or diagnoses using these terms.

Leaving aside the uncertainty of questions surrounding the original composition and later reception of all such medical commonplace books in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, which would be outside the scope of this paper, below is an overview of the sanitary and medicinal uses of water that appear in these five compilations. First, the previously edited English “book”⁹ from circa 1444 uses all of the above describe terms, and contains dozens of medical recipes in common with the four Huntington Library manuscripts. It contains no less than 113 mentions of water as an ingredient or part of therapeutic bathing, or treatment.¹⁰ The majority are recipes steeping herbs or bark into clean water, sometimes adding animal- or plant-based oils, such as eel drippings or other oil.

Many ingredients are boiled in water first, with the water to be strained off. Still others, such as violet or some flower and herb preparations, are “tem-

8 It is worth noting that not all the ingredients are the same as in the 1517 Low German surgery manual in Chiara Benati’s study in the present volume; for example, ingredients including cats are absent.

9 *A Leechbook, or Collection of Medical Recipes of the Fifteenth Century: the Text of Ms. no. 136 of the Medical Society of London, Together with a Transcript into Modern Spelling*, ed. Warren R. Dawson (London: Macmillan, 1934; and Whitefish, MT: Kessinger Legacy Reprints, rpt. 2004).

10 Bathing, washing, and soaking in mineral springs as treatment for illness or relief of discomfort appear in medical commonplace books and are echoed in medieval romance, as demonstrated by Rosa A. Perez’s contribution to the present volume. See also from the historical perspective on bathing, including a discussion on the terminology of bathing, in *Bains curatifs et bains hygiéniques en Italie et de l’antiquité au moyen âge*, ed. Guérin-Beauvois and Jean-Marie Martin (Rome: L’École française de Rome, 2007), 5–8. Therapeutic bathing or washing in this corpus would be related to the principles of thermalism (bathing in spring water) or thalassotherapy (bathing in seawater or sea products) in modern terms.

pered,” or mixed, combined, and sometimes strengthened in consistency with water.¹¹ The *Leechbook*, in addition, contains a few “aqua” recipes, or mixtures of water, wine, and spices (such as cinnamon, cloves, anise)¹² touted as a relief for headache or stomach ailments. Water is often specified as clean or fresh, or salt water, or rainwater, or boiled clean river water, or rose water, or running water. Some recipes require water to be boiled or distilled, with herbs often steeped or “reduced in half” and strained in the preparation.

The specificity of the type of water to be used for different indications demonstrates knowledge of, or beliefs in, its different properties. In the *Leechbook*, water with distilled herbs acts as an antidote for certain venoms. Therapeutic bathing also appears as: “a bath of sauge ... and garlick and hote water up to the navel,” [a bath of sage ... and garlic and hot water up to the navel] or “wash the sores in hot water or stale ale” [wash the sores in hot water or stale ale]. Water, be it hot or clean, is not only essential as an ingredient, but as an active part of the treatment, particularly in washing wounds, and also in non-visible ailments, too, such as washing the head for headaches.

Washing the head with warm water relieves headaches no less than fourteen times across these texts. In addition, honey and clear water, or fennel water, are indicated to clear, or improve, sight. Here, the ever-elusive cure for the common cold and cough is simply bathing nightly or washing one’s feet in hot water. Hygiene and the use of hot water are thus therapeutic.

As shown throughout this volume, bathing in medieval and early modern times was not an anathema; rather, it figures in many medical treatment programs in fictional and non-fictional works alike.¹³ Bathing in clean, hot herb water is a common treatment for everything from dermatological to orthopedic problems in HM 58: f 49r, such as:

11 See Terence Scully, “Tempering Medieval Food,” *Food in the Middle Ages: A Book of Essays*, ed. Melitta Weiss Adamson (New York: Garland, 1995), 3–24, on the term and concept of tempering in medieval cooking and recipe books.

12 *Leechbook*, 342. Recipes for *aquavita* waters also are included at the end of the last folio of HM 58 and appear throughout many commonplace manuals.

13 Classen and others in this volume have demonstrated that there existed a clear dichotomy between clean and dirty in the Middle Ages, and that it was not a dirty time, contrary to popular assumptions today. For a more general overview of western social norms related to bathing from ancient to modern times in their socio-historical and literary context, see Katherine Ashenburg, *The Dirt on Clean: An Unsanitized History* (New York: North Point Press, 2008). Taking a more social-psychology perspective in another historical survey of medieval and other attitudes toward bathing and cleanliness is: Virginia Smith, *Clean: A History of Personal Hygiene and Purity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 144–84.

for broke bony, knows, and joynte take wallewort, ... moggewort, mercurie, horehound ... And sethe he in water and make thereof a bathe and styke the therein, and hote as thou maist suffir.

[for broken bones, nose, or joints, take walwort, mugwort, mercury, and horehound, and soak it in water and make a bath of it and stick yourself in it, and as hot as you can stand it.]

Similarly, bathing in herb water for pain management and first aid for broken bones appears in HM 19079 f 14v:

Take these herbes and stamp hem wyth [clean water and] clene botter ... For to helen broken leggen other broken armes other ... broken bones furst...

[Take these herbs and smash them with clean water and clean butter. To heal broken legs and broken arms or other broken bones first.]

The herbal section in HM 58 focuses on “simples” or “officinals” with marginal rubrics, such as these with obvious modern English equivalents:

aneth, garlick, safron, foxglove, galyngal, herbe water, lavendre, lettus, licoris, horehound, redde horhound, mandrake, mynte ...

[dill, garlic, saffron, foxglove, galingale, herbal water, lavender, lettuce, licorice, horehound, red horehound, mandrake, mint].¹⁴

In this medical commonplace book, many treatments, topical or oral, are water-based and called waters. In HM 58 marginal rubrics include herbal water several times. HM 58, 43r begins a dozen pages of apothecary herbal waters, such as:

for to make a water that is y cleded maidons melke that shal dou away saucefleme¹⁵ and the rede goute in the visage ...

[To make a water that is called maiden's milk that shall do away with rash and redness in the face ...]

In addition, HM 58 f 47r continues with more multi-purpose curative waters, for drinking and applying topically, and lists them as effective for the following indi-

¹⁴ For a chronological study on texts that are primarily “herbals,” see Agnes Arber, *Herbals, their Origin and Evolution, a Chapter in the History of Botany 1470–1670* (1912; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

¹⁵ The term *saucefleme* could refer to urticaria, any type of red rash, allergic reaction, pustules, redness, or acne.

cations: “for the mygrayne. A gode water for eeyn. For the stone” [For migraine. A good water for the eyes. For stones.] There are other similar indications, such as “For to do awa saucefleme in a manner” [To do away with rash in one way.] Water and herb waters are often indicated for head ailments, skin, and eye pathologies in all five of these commonplace books. Most herb waters are indicated for both hygiene and pain management.

In HM 58 ff 39v–40r, the rubric *Rosa Rubea*, or medical uses for the garden-variety red rose, lists rose-water as another common multipurpose water, to alleviate stomach problems, fever pain, internal bleeding, what today would be possibly fatty liver or cirrhosis, and what was possibly gingivitis, as well as infected or gangrene limbs:

Rosa rubea is an herbe that men clebyn redde rose. This herbe is common yno. The vertue of this herbe is that hit wolle asswage the grete hote of a manes stomake, and the gret stoppyng of the lyver. And he wolle stopyng the grete hete of a manys stomake. Also the water of rosis is gode to asswage the grete peyen off the fever ... Is gode to hele roten flesh among a manise teeth also take the rynd of the rosure and sethe hure and take that water and that is gode for a man that bledith ynward if he drynk that. The water must be soden with rose and he wille kepe a mannys lymbes from rotyng ...

[*Rosa Rubea* is an herb that men call red rose. This herb is common enough. The virtue of this herb is that it will assuage the great heat of a man's stomach, and a big blockage of a man's liver, and it will stop the great heat of a man's stomach. Also the water of roses is good to assuage the great pain of the fever ... It is good to heal rotten flesh between a man's teeth; also take the rind of the rose and soak it in that water and that is good for a man that is bleeding internally if he drinks it. The water must be steeped with rose and it will keep a man's limbs from rotting ...]

Thus this seemingly cure-all rose water was indicated for the treatment of digestion issues (in particular what would be termed heartburn or acid reflux today), dental problems, internal bleeding (as from ulcers) as an anti-inflammatory and pain and fever reducer, and for all sorts of infections. Most digestive and pain relief remedies in this manuscript appear to include water or herbal water, and rose water is suggested as having (what would today be termed) antiseptic properties.¹⁶

16 Rose petals and rose hips have proven pharmacological properties. Rose oil and rose water was used in medieval Persian medicine prior to these five manuscripts, and as early as the tenth century, a practice which has been continued into twenty-first-century pharmacology; rose oil and distilled rose water is known for its antibacterial, astringent, analgesic, and antiseptic qualities for use in holistic medicine, and even cosmetic dermatology (where it is used as a redness reducer, astringent, and antioxidant). For a meta-analysis and literature review of the use of the Damask rose, for instance, for reported anti-HIV, antibacterial, antioxidant, antitussive, hyp-

Then, on f 43r another longer recipe specifies the use of clean water and a clean container,

A gode oyntement for the colde gowte and for the pal[a]sie is this medicyn crushed-up black flint stones, washed in clene water, put into a clene potte.

[A good ointment for the cold gout and for the palsy is this medicine: crushed up black flint stones, washed in clean water, put into a clean pot.]

All of the five treatises studied specify clean water in various mixtures, but this is the most specific mention of clean, washed ingredients going into a clean mixing or serving vessel prior to topical applications. In HM 64 as well, there are similar ointments and preparations made with herbal waters, ff 186v–187v, for instance, in which ointments appear with herbs, honey, boiled water, oil, and turpentine as suggested ingredients. Cleanliness and hygiene are emphasized in the preparation of all of these treatments.

Furthermore, washing the ingredients intended for pharmaceutical preparations in water also is emphasized. Specifically clean water, hot water, or boiled water or salt water are often specified, implying their hygienic function or sterile nature; for example f 43r begins:

Polus rubius is the best poudre that is for eny sore and best sauynge for wond and for bruses and for canker and for fester and alle other seknes outwardis.

[Polus rubius is the best powder that is for any sore and best salve for wounds and for bruises and for canker sores, and for festering wounds, and for all other external conditions.]

There are many both internal and topical all-purpose powders or remedies that say they may be applied to almost any “sore” or “feast,” or infection today. It continues with herbal water and powder treatments for specific pathologies, such as the two remedies above. Here hygiene and cleanliness on the part of the physician, pharmacist, or home care-taker, are emphasized. It is notable also that this text makes judgments on effectiveness, provides alternate indications, and

notic, anti-diabetic, and relaxant properties, see Mohammad Hossein Boskabady, Mohammad Naser Shafei, Zahra Saberi, and Somayeh Amini, “Pharmacological Effects of *Rosa Damascena*,” *Iran Journal of Basic Medical Sciences* 14.4 (2011): 295–307. Several other medical and pharmaceutical studies show the effectiveness of rose water. Rose water and rose electuaries (medieval medicinal sweets) appear regularly in fourteenth-through sixteenth-century insular and continental medical commonplace books and beyond.

sometimes elsewhere offers potential substitutions, sometimes mineral and not only herbal.

HM 58 folio 1 begins with different purifying uses for the well-known and somewhat ubiquitous medieval remedy, here indicated as an anaphrodisiac, that is a home remedy intended to promote chastity and curb lust, herb when mixed with water, Agnus Castus: chastity, drunkenness, lethargy, birth control, mental illness, and “purging,” or what today might be considered something akin to detoxification or a “cleanse,” for example:

The vertu of this herbe is that he wolle gladeli kepe men and wymmen chaste. Also this herbe wille opyn the poris and lete owt the wicked humoris and spirits of manes bodi. This herbe distroioeth the moisture of manys seed. Also the same auctor is seyen that if this herbe be ysothen with fenyll and with a littell water ... it is goode to distroie the colde dropesie. Also if this herbe be soden ... in salt water and afterward the hyender parties of a manrys hedde be strongly, Y wasshe therewith he helith and unbyndeth an evyll that men clepen lytarge. Also, the jus dryeth and quellethe folkse luste of lecheri nott onli if he bee dronke ...

[The virtue of this herb is that it will gladly keep men and women chaste. Also, this herb will open the pores and let out the wicked humors and spirits of a man's body. This herb destroys the moisture of man's seed. Also, the same authority says that if this herb is soaked with fennel and with a little water ... is good to destroy the cold dropsy. Also, if this herb is soaked ... in salt water and after the back of a man's head is washed briskly in it, he will heal and it will stop an evil called lethargy. Also, the juice dries and quenches peoples' lust and lechery, and this not only if he is drunk ...]

Thus, cleansing with water, herb water such as Agnus Castus and fennel, or salt water and Agnus Castus, are claimed to have both physical and moral purification effects, when it comes to chastity, and are listed as a cure for the sins of sloth and lechery. Some waters therefore are imbued with moral signification, and are said to act on behaviors, as well as having cleansing and curative properties.

Multi-use medicinal waters are common, and the same water is said to cure everything from lechery to broken bones to eye ailments, because herb water

schal hele the wonde fayre and wel. Also it wyll drawe out brokyn bonys in a wounde as summe auctoures seyn ... Take a dragme of betonye and stamp it small and medele it with warm water and drynke it iiii tymes fasting and it wele breke on[ly] weeb aboutyn the eye and clere it weel and fayre. Also yif thou haue watry eyne ete iche ...and so thou schalt ben hol.¹⁷

¹⁷ On the many uses of Agnus Castus, also known as *vitex*, *chastetree*, or *chasteberry*, see Gösta Brodin, ed. *Agnus Castus: A Middle English Herbal* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1950), 133. For more on betony or the other flowers and herbs discussed here, see the volume of

[shall heal the wound fair and well. Also, it will draw out broken bones in a wound as some authorities say ...Take a dragma of betony and mash it up fine and mix it with warm water and drink it four times while fasting and it will clear up and make the eye well. Also, if you have watery, itchy eyes ... and you shall be cured].

Another HM 58 recipe further praises the curative powers and hygienic properties of herbal water,

The vertue of water and herbe is good to destroye pestelens and frensy. Also it aswuagyth the akyng in mannys hed. Also it kepyth and clensyth the hed fro alle maner wyrmys and vermyng.

[The virtue of water and herb is that it is good to destroy pestilence and frenzy. Also, it assuages the aching in a man's head. Also it keeps and cleanses the head from all manner of worms and vermin.]

Washing then appears as a treatment for migraine and insomnia in all of these manuscripts, as for example these instructions for making and using water with herb and poppies,

put wylde poppy ... his eyne or yf a man hawe a mygreyn. Also for a man that may noght slepe take this herbe and sethe it in water and waysch hys face ther-with ...

[put in wild poppy ... for his eyes or if a man has a migraine. Also for a man that may not sleep, take this herb and seethe it in water and wash his face with it].

In the two examples above, water with herb or flower appears to function both as general cleansing and relieving pain or insomnia. The wild poppy is an opioid.

Conversely, some recipes are very specific to one ailment, as with f 78v, where there is a doodle illustration of a manicule, or pointing finger, which appears to be added after the first scribe had completed his task, holding herbs with a flower, bulb, and roots, and pointing at the recipe indicated:

For worms that be[e]lth on a man. Take betayne and drie hyt and make poudre of hit and lete the seke drynke thereof yn hote water and he schal be hole.

[For worms that are on a man. Take betony and dry it and make a powder out of it, and let the sick person drink it in hot water and he shall be cured.]

Again, wholeness, or overall wellness is the goal of the practitioner using warm, clean, herbal water mixtures.

Turning to Huntington Library manuscript HM 1336 (some details about the provenance are known for this manuscript, as it says it was written for Robert Taylor of Boxford), which includes medical and culinary recipes, a concordance of herb names in Latin and English, and medical prognostications. Approximately 220 recipes appear in the first section, with over one third containing water, or requiring boiling water or boiling ingredients in water, in order to consume the water as a tea, or to strain it off and include the boiled ingredient in a more complicated preparation.

First, it is important to note that culinary recipes, dietary regiments, and medical prescriptions are recorded together in all five of the codices studied here, suggesting that eating, drinking, and taking medicinal cures were conceived of as working in conjunction with each other. Most of the recipes include more than three ingredients, for example, the first treatment involving water is for an anti-inflammatory: ff 2v–18v (and 29v–34v):

Forte make water of lyne, Notmuges ... galingale ...seed of cardmoyn ... and if you felle it sore ley yerto ... and do y[th]us tillie you be hole.

[To make water of flax, put nutmeg, galingale, cardamom seed, and if you feel sore, put it on there and do this until you are cured.]

Thus washing and treating a sore spot or wound in this spice water repetitively is said to heal, or make “whole.”

Along with behavioral modifications and environmental changes, herbal waters and washing are preferred over prayer by the *medicus* of HM 1336,

also take rywe and pound it and lay it asydde. & enjoynt this with thyn hede all abouve ... also take rye fennel and seethe in watyr and wasshe thyne hede ande take the juyse of the black beet ... for eche manner evylle in the head have.

[Also take rye and pound it and lay it aside. And put this on the top of your head. Also take rye and fennel and seethe it in water and wash your head and take the juice of the black beet, for all manners of evil in the head one might have.]

In correlating several examples from this manuscript, other recipes that accompany a prescribed behavioral change (such as walking, bathing, or resting) are: mustard, rye water, mint, or verbena, steeped in hot water. This is similar to the other four codices, as well, though they do not all include rye.

Next, Huntington Library manuscript HM 19079 contains dozens of parallels with the manuscripts above, and also provides several types of pharmaceuticals

for each sickness, including “syrup for sickness,” “good medicine,” “water,” and “ointment.” There are several multi-use recipes that contain oil and water and aim to balance the humors, as in f 31v for instance:

And understand that bytter medycynes bey profitable for the hed and for the stomak ... An oyle that dissolves colde humors and water hem is y mad is water is good for akyng of the hed that cometh of colde ... And that cometh of plente of humores aboute ye seknesse and for cold goutes.

[And understand that bitter medicines are profitable for the head and for the stomach ... An oil that dissolves cold humor and water is thus made. This water is good for aching of the head that comes from cold. And that comes from plenty of humors from your sickness and for cold gout.]

Water temperature, strength, size and saturation of medicines, and the length of treatment constitute the three main concerns in HM 19079, as for example in ear-ache treatments in f 58r:

And understande that alle the medycynes that shulde bey don in the eres schalle y ben warme and nogt colde and finaley gronde and nogt gret and stronge medycynnes, ne schall the nogt long abyden in the ere lest they drawen to muche mater to the eren.

[And understand that all the medicines that should be placed in the ears shall be warm there and not cold, and finely ground and not big and strong medicines, nor shall they remain a long time in the ear, lest they draw to much matter into the ear.]

The temperature and concentration and length of hygienic, anti-inflammatory, or cleansing treatments here are thus moving beyond humoral balance, and explain how not to harm the patient.

In addition in HM 19079, there are several nutritional medicine recommendations, using the verb “dieting.”¹⁸ Treatments urge moderation and caution the sick in general to “avoid wine, salted, fried, or strong meats ...”

In addition to nutrition and diet, the medical practitioner is to suggest: the patient rest in a dark place, elevate the head, eat easily digested meat, drink

¹⁸ Though the term “sickdish” does not appear in these manuscripts, it does appear in roughly contemporary recipe books as a dietary complement to or replacement of medical treatment; for a study of sickdish recipes (including a few broth dishes akin to the modern proverbial curative chicken soup) and a brief discussion of their possible medical indications, see Terence Scully, “The Sickdish in Early French Recipe Collections,” *Health, Disease, and Healing in Medieval Culture*, ed. Sheila Campbell, Bert Hall, and David Klausner (Toronto: Center for Medieval Studies, University of Toronto, 1992), 132–40.

“clear,” clean water or ale, to relieve headaches or “evil” or “violence” in the head. More specifically, even ear-ache is treated through diet, as on f 56r–57r:

ERE. Earaches. Liquids, oils, and dyet. Dytentege of hem that haveth thys seknesse schal ben as of men that haveth the fever cotydyan ... herbes sodden in water.

[EARS. Earaches. Liquids, oils, and dyet. Dieting of those who have this illness shall be the same as for men that have ordinary fever: herbs soaked in water].

The herbs are fennel and others.¹⁹ Then following these herbal water treatments, f 60r expands on the uses of herbal waters and warms, following the Hippocratic oath to do no harm, not to leave the herbal water for an excessive period of time:

medycyn in the ere ... for more than an hour has passed ... for dred of doing more harme.

[medicine in the ear for more than an hour has passed, for fear of doing more harm].

For other hearing and ear ailments, the f 64r recipe also includes mothers’ milk, fat, honey, and clean water, all ingredients that are seen throughout this codex as purifying and hygienic:

And tak of the wavyre of an eg schelle ful and cast in to two spones ful of oyle or other of botter ... and two sponful of hony and on sponful of Womanes mylke that norestheth (=nourish) a knave chyld yef it be for a man in elles of a womanes mylk that norestheth a mayde chylde. And do of thys a drope other or two in hys ere and stop hys ere.

[And take an eggshell full of water, and cast in to it two spoons of oil or butter and ... two spoonfuls of honey and one spoonful of a woman’s milk, that is nursing a male child, if it is for a male, or else of a woman’s milk that is nursing a female child if for a woman. And add to this a drop or two in his ere and plug up his/her ear.]

19 Fennel, or water steeped with fennel and other herbs, appears in all five manuscripts, as an analgesic or for digestive problems. It is interesting to note that in pharmacology today, fennel is a known antispasmodic and carminative and has been shown recently in several studies to be effective for irritable bowel syndrome and other digestive indications; just for one for example, see P. Portincasa, L. Bonfrate, M. L. Scribano, A. Kohn, AN. Caporaso, D. Festi, M. C. Campanale, T. Di Rienzo, M. Guarino, M. Taddia, M. V. Fogli, M. Grimaldi, A. Gasbarrini, “Curcumin and Fennel Essential Oil Improve Symptoms and Quality of Life in Patients with Irritable Bowel Syndrome,” *Journal of Gastrointestinal and Liver Diseases* 25.2 (2016): 151–57. Of course, though beyond the scope of this paper, many of the other plants and herbs that appear in these and other medieval medical commonplace manuscripts have been tested in pharmacology and pharmaceutical chemistry.

Milk is also seen as curative, but not as frequently as water in these manuscripts. Note here that the mother's milk, specifying "a mayde child" mixed with the water and oil, is related to the patient's sex – here a female patient – and this is common in this period.

For neurological issues or mental illness, water is also used in treatment. For instance, in this manuscript, catalepsy and melancholy require the avoidance of certain difficult to digest foods and unclean water,

... it be for thylke that have cathalepsy ... and absteyne they from malencolyes metes as be of and alle maner caulwertes and betes And andpejen and mylk and other whyt metes and salte metes and soure metes and rosted or fryed and from ... muyrry wateres and fro hertes fleysche and swynes flesche and schepes fleysch and from notes and apples and barley.

[it is for those that have catalepsy ... and they abstain from melancholy meats, as well as from all manner of collards, beets, pigeon, milk, and other white meats, salted meats, sour meats, and roasted or fried meats ... and from murky waters and from deer meat and pork and sheep meat and from nuts and apples and barley.]

Abstention from unhealthy foods and unclean water is suggested for both physical and mental wellness. Clean water or clear wine are thus viewed as curative throughout this corpus and are integrated with dietary changes.

HM 64 includes Latin, Anglo-Norman, and Middle English plant names, dated after ca. 1456. It contains an herbal, astrological and astronomical texts and maps, part of the the *Galeni Medici Regimen Sanitatis*, a drawing of an anatomical Vein Man (f 8v) and two Zodiac men (ff 12v-14r); colored drawings of urinalysis bottles, (ff 39v–47v); diagrams, charts, tables, and astrological signs, as well as over forty remarkable dietary regimes in one section that focuses on nutritional medicine [f18r and ff 22v–25v], in which certain foods are contraindicated for particular conditions, such as the rhyming mnemonic dietary prescription on f 22v:

A diet for man that is brusid or bete. Whoso be woundid or evill Beete, Garlike ne oynonyx maye he non ete.

[A diet for a man that is bruised or beaten. He who is wounded or badly beaten, neither beets, not garlic, nor onion may be eaten.]

Many dietary suggestions are of course based on humoral medicine, though eating healthy food that is easily digested, and drinking clean water seem to be recommended for many patients and even for those healthy people who are not sick.

Though similar to the other four manuscripts considered here, HM 64 more regularly cites sources and names some treatments, including some including herbal waters, for example those translated from Petrus Hispanus, *Liber de*

*oculo.*²⁰ HM 64 includes translations of the first through fifth waters and suggests other indications:

Here bygynnys the makynge of the nine marvelous waters, whiche Peter of Spayne made and founde hem by his owne kyndely witte, of the whiche the furst is clepid the precious water of herbis ... Item pro oculis bona aqua que vocatur lumen oculorum. Take rewē fenell ... as water brenyng and hit is goode for the colde gowt (ff 103r–04r).

[Here begins the making of nine marvelous waters, that Peter of Spain made and discovered by his own clever wits, of which the first is called the precious water of herbs ... Then a water that is good for the eyes that is called the light of the eyes. Take raw fennel ... as water for burning, and it is good for cold gout.]

Thus nine (plus several additional) waters are suggested, including fennel and other herbs, for eye problems that can also be tried on totally unrelated diseases, such as gout, as we have seen above.

To summarize, concepts of wellness in these Huntington Library manuscripts as well as in the 1444 *Leechbook* concur for the most part on uses of herbs for certain indications, and the use of certain types of water, bathing, herbal water drinks, and therapeutic washing. Health and cleanliness are inextricably linked in all five manuscripts. All five suggest a similar *officinalis*. Moreover, all five, and certainly many other medical commonplace books from the fifteenth century, if we were to include a larger sample, suggest preventatively that sickness, wounds, humoral imbalance, and unclean habits may lead to pain, unconsciousness, or death, and that relief from some conditions can be found in washing and in the use of medicinal herbs. They also draw a connection between a sound, clean body and a healthy mind, with frequent mentions that “evil” in one provokes evil in the other.

Exploring such medical treatises, along with the medicinal, hygienic, and dietary prescriptions they have in common, is essential in mapping medieval conceptions of the continuum of illness and wellness. The commonplace books discussed here demonstrate that medicine, whether professional or home remedy, blurred the lines between surgery, pharmacy, nutrition, bedside manner, and hygiene.

As elsewhere in the present volume, these manuscripts repeatedly recommend drinking or washing regularly in clean and often warm or hot water, ingesting or applying certain astringent herbs, cleaning wounds, drinking herbal

20 Petrus Hispanus, *Die Ophthalmologie (liber de oculo)*, ed. A. M. Berger (Munich: Lehmann, 1899), is an edition of this originally mid-thirteenth century Latin text based on the Munich, Paris, Florence, and Rome manuscripts of this Latin treatise on eye pathologies.

waters, engaging in hygienic and therapeutic bathing, using clean dishes in medical preparation, as well as seeking clean drinking water for even healthy patients. These manuals all emphasize not only intervention but also prevention, including proper diet, clean water, and washing. In the five manuscript examples explored above as in the Introduction by Albrecht Classen and in texts studied in the other contributions to this volume, again we see underlined the importance of three elements of overall well being for medieval physicians was clearly pronounced: cleanliness, hydration, and hygiene.

David Tomíček

Water, Environment, and Dietetic Rules in Bohemian Sources of the Early Modern Times

The present essay will focus on the issue of water as the natural substance most closely linked with hygiene. It will try to explain the role which water played in common life during the early-modern times, and how the contemporaries valued it and judged its influence on the environment. The material this paper will focus on predominantly draws on Bohemian sources originating from the period between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries and places emphasis on physicians' writings about dietetic ideas.

Dietetics and, generally, medicine of this period stemmed from the humoral theory, with its origins in classical antiquity.¹ The teaching about the four bodily humors further developed the overall philosophical concept of four basic elements, which form the substance of the created world. In the human body, the characteristic qualities of these elements are reflected in the analogous qualities of the bodily humors, while the balance between them guarantees the condition perceived as health. If the balance is disturbed, it results in an unfortunate situation demonstrated as illness. A collapsed balance among the bodily humors is viewed as a natural cause of death. During the high Middle Ages, the given theoretical foundation was further developed into the teaching about the so-called "six things unnatural to humans" (*sex res non naturales*), understood as the basis of the doctrine of a healthy regimen.² In this form, dietetics was lectured on at medieval universities, which probably also provided the basis for the literary genre called *regimens of health* (*regimina sanitatis*).³ Medieval dietetics highlighted two chief principles: avoiding extreme expressions in all activities

¹ Lawrence I. Conrad, Michael Neve, Vivian Nutton, Roy Porter, and Andrew Wear, *The Western Medical Tradition. 800 BC to AD 1800* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 23–25.

² *Articella* (Venice: Petrus Bergomensis de Quarengiis, 1507), A.1. Cf. *Medieval Medicine—A Reader*, ed. Faith Wallis. *Readings in Medieval Civilizations and Cultures*, 15 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 144–46. See also Melitta Weiss Adamson, *Medieval Dietetics*. *German Studies in Canada*, 5 (Frankfurt a. M., Berlin, et al.: Peter Lang, 1995), 18–21.

³ Pedro Gil Sotres, "The Regimens of Health," *Western Medical Thought from Antiquity to the Middle Ages*, ed. Mirko D. Grmek (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 291–318; here

David Tomíček, John Evangelista Purkyne University, Czech Republic

and changing one's accustomed habits to the least possible extent. The subject of water in the context of this form of dietetics belonged to no less than three of the six groups of the unnatural things. It was connected with food and drinks (*cibus et potus*), bodily excretions and secretions (*excreta et secreta*), and environment (*aer*). The following analysis will demonstrate that these concerns largely determined the perception of water at that time.

I Water

The comprehensive treatise entitled *A Basic and Perfect Regimen of Health* (*Grunтовní a dokonalý regiment zdraví*), written by the university-trained physician Johann Kopp von Raumenthal (1487–1558), naturally ranks water among beverages but not as an optimal one. An ideal drink in Kopp's view is beneficial to the human body in three main aspects: it replenishes the nutrients discharged in the course of the excretion processes; it disintegrates food, thus easing progress through the viscera, and it facilitates digestion. Therefore, the recommended drink is wine. Nevertheless, Kopp admits that wine consumption entails potential risks and does not suit all ages, physical constitutions, and health conditions, and therefore he finds it appropriate to suggest other options. Kopp describes water as a liquid created by God to the benefit of all creatures, i.e., also humans.⁴ In another part of the book, he praises the significance of water by claiming that if God had thought it more useful, he would have provided the world with springs gushing malmsey or other kinds of wine; but He acted otherwise for specific reasons.⁵

For Kopp, water could be the most beneficial of all liquids for those who are used to it from early childhood and only drink it pure and unpolluted. In addition, water differs from other beverages by being void of any taste, one therefore does not drink more than his or her body requires. Kopp points out that those

300–02. See also Carole Rawcliffe, *Medicine and Society in Later Medieval England* (Stroud: Alan Sutton, 1995), 37–39. Cf. also the contribution to the present volume by Debra L. Stoudt.

⁴ Johann Kopp von Raumenthal, *Grunтовní a dokonalý regiment zdraví* (Prague: Jan Had, 1536), 25v. See also Bo J. Theutenberg, *Doktor Johannes Copp von Raumenthal* (Skara: Skara stiftshistoriska sällsk, 2013), 27–30; David Tomíček, “The Concept of Good Life According to the King's Physician Johann Kopp von Raumenthal,” *Gutes Leben und guter Tod von der Spätantike bis zur Gegenwart: Ein philosophisch-ethischer Diskurs über die Jahrhunderte hinweg*, ed. Albrecht Clasen. Theophrastus Paracelsus Studien, 4 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2012), 309–16.

⁵ Kopp von Raumenthal, *Grunтовní a dokonalý regiment zdraví* (see note 4), 104r.

people enjoy better health and live longer who are from lands where the habit of drinking water on a regular basis prevails. But because many available sources of water are rather risky, he does not recommend water as a chief form of drink.⁶

The anonymous author of the treatise *About the Preservation of Health (O zachování dobrého zdraví)*, printed in 1584, holds an almost equally reserved position in this respect. Drinking large amounts of water reportedly has a negative impact on the stomach. And although the writer perceives water as more suitable than wine for the sole purpose of satiating thirst, a healthy lifestyle in his view requires washing food down with the latter – while drinking water is, on the contrary, recommended only as remedial in situations following excessive wine consumption.⁷ An unambiguous warning is then aimed at people forced to drink water from unknown sources, and explicitly at those who travel. Unknown water sources are presented as a serious health peril, and such water is described as poisonous. Prophylaxis therefore requires that travelers who must drink water apparently suspicious due to its consistence or smell should eat garlic along with it to compensate the dangers.⁸

The significance of the given advice in relation to drinking water from odd sources departs from the contemporary medical literature, which viewed garlic as a strong and effective antidote against the most serious forms of intoxication, equaling emerald and bezoar stone.⁹ In addition, its advantages – as in the case of onion – were its wide accessibility and low price. The physician Johann Černý (ca. 1456–1530), in his *Treatise on the Plague Diseases (Spis o nemocech morních)* would in this respect compare the effects of onion soaked in vinegar to the famed theriac, suggesting that the poor people use garlic as an almost omnipotent remedy the effects of which allegedly make up for any drug available in the contemporary dispensaries.¹⁰

A physician and teacher at Prague University, Adam Huber of Riesenpach (died 1616) also advised adding garlic to bad tasting water in his book on healthy

⁶ Kopp von Raumenthal, *Gruntovní a dokonalý regiment zdraví* (see note 4), 25r.

⁷ *O zachování dobrého zdraví, knížka školy salernitánské* (Olomouc: Fridrich Milichtaler, 1584), N₄v–N₆v.

⁸ *O zachování dobrého zdraví* (see note 7), K₄r–K₄v.

⁹ Milada Říhová, Dana Stehlíková, and David Tomíček, *Lékaři na dvoře Karla IV. a Jana Lucemburského* (Prague and Litomyšl: Paseka, 2010), 92–102.

¹⁰ Jan Černý, *Spis o nemocech morních* (Prague: Jan of Choceň, 1542), C₁r. See also Christiane Nockels Fabbri, *Treating Medieval Plague: The Wonderful Virtues of Theriac*. Early Science and Medicine, 12.3 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2007), 247–83. Maria Do Sameiro Barroso, *The Bezoar Stone: A Princely Antidote, the Távora Sequeira Pinto Collection – Oporto*. Acta Medico-Historica Adriatica, 12.1 (Rijeka: Croatian Scientific Society for the History of Health Culture, 2014), 77–98.

lifestyle, entitled *Regimen of Health* (*Regiment zdraví*). He resolutely forbade drinking suspicious water, noting how many travelers had died as a result of such imprudence, and warned all those engaged in military campaigns that their untested water is even more risky for it can be poisoned by the enemy. The author solves the problem of lacking suitable sources while journeying by recommending sucking a crystal or, if possible, a silver object – or, at least, silica – in one's mouth, which reportedly may help in calming thirst.¹¹ Huber would not even recommend safe and tried water, assuming that the population of the northern, transalpine regions is predisposed to diseases originating from a humid and cold climate and that larger amount of water may result in enfeeblement. If there is a reason for drinking water at all, it is necessary to boil it in order to eliminate the potentially present harmful substances.¹²

II Beer

Johann Kopp von Raumenthal eventually concluded that the lack of clean water made humanity invent another, altogether beneficial and healthy beverage known as beer. In his words, beer in the Czech lands is solely brewed from wheat (and is thus called white) or barley (making the so-called lager). Prague breweries were, in Kopp's opinion, linked with wheat beer, which he extolled as “the hallowed Bohemian one” and probably perceived it as a Bohemian rarity of its own kind.¹³

The fact that the Czech lands produced wheat beer, called “white” by the locals, was also appreciated in the *Treatise on the Watering Resort of Charles IV* (*Tractatus de termis Caroli Quarti*), written by the physician Wenceslas Payer of Loket (ca. 1488–1537).¹⁴ The significance of water for the final taste of beer was also underlined by the supremely literate Jesuit, Bohuslav Balbín (1621–1688), in his Latin *Miscellany from the History of the Bohemian Kingdom* (*Miscellanea historica regni Bohemiae*, late 1670s). The author opines that the Prague brewers active on the Vltava left-bank Lesser Town can never produce as delicious and

¹¹ *Regiment zdraví*, ed. Pavel Kucharský (Prague: Avicenum, 1980), 148–50.

¹² *Regiment zdraví* (see note 11), 63.

¹³ Kopp von Raumenthal, *Gruntovní a dokonalý regiment zdraví* (see note 4), 105r.

¹⁴ Václav Payer z Lokte, *Tractatus de termis Caroli Quarti–Pojednání o Karlových Varech z roku 1522*, ed. Vladimír Křížek (Prague: Avicenum, 1984), 32. See also Karel Černý, “Raná vyobrazení anatomické pitvy v Čechách,” *Anatomie od Vesalia po současnost*, ed. Miloš Grim, Ondřej Nařka, and Karel Černý (Prague: Grada, 2014), 61–73; here 62–64.

thick beverage as the ones from the right-bank towns, since the first use water that comes from the part of the river fed by the Berounka – the left-bank Vltava inflow joining the main river just before Prague.¹⁵

Kopp valued these two basic types of beer – of either wheat or barley – as extremely healthy and of high nutritional value.¹⁶ Adam Huber subsequently tried to substantiate the benefits of beer by referring to the splendid physical conditions and invigorated looks of the population inhabiting the lands where the drinking of beer was customary.¹⁷ True, the traditional fondness for beer in the Czech lands is beyond doubt; but it is also true that the Bohemian landscape was more characterized by vineyards during the premodern period than today; however, wine was the privilege of the local upper classes, while both burghers and villagers were confined to the rather inferior beer.

The Czech expression for beer, *pivo*, stems from the earliest layers of the ancient Bohemian vocabulary and is most probably of pre-Slavonic origin.¹⁸ It seems that its initial meaning was rather inclusive and describes anything drinkable, such as the hot substance made of malt and called *patok* in medieval Bohemia (it is worth noting that even twenty-first-century Czech understands the term as synonymous with “plonk” or “gut-rot”). The inferior table wheat beer was for craftsmen, journeymen, and village domestics; those above their rank could mainly enjoy its stronger and more expensive barley variation.¹⁹

The latter liquid was most probably the old beer to which the Bohemian peasants treated themselves during their visits to towns – at least according to the depictions by Johann Butzbach (1477–1516), recorded in his autobiographical *Hodoporicon*. The author vividly describes scenes with peasants accomplishing their daily businesses in the market and hastily retreating to the town pubs, eager to make the most of their leisure moments. There, they ordered their white buns, washing them down with jugs of the above-mentioned strong beer. Rather sooner than later, they began their happy chatter, and as soon as they noticed a woman, they would begin cat calling, reminding one of the neigh of a stallion spotting a mare. Butzbach claimed that this was the behavior of not only drunken peasants but also of people of higher ranks.²⁰ The Moravian physician Thomas Jordan of

¹⁵ Bohuslaus Balbinus, *Miscellanea historica Regni Bohemiae* (Prague: Georgius Czernoch, 1679), 61.

¹⁶ Kopp von Raumenthal, *Gruntovní a dokonalý regiment zdraví* (see note 4), 105r.

¹⁷ *Regiment zdraví* (see note 11), 71.

¹⁸ Igor Němec, *Slova a dějiny* (Prague: Academia, 1980), 106.

¹⁹ Martin Nodl, *Středověk v nás* (Prague: Argo, 2015), 180.

²⁰ Karel Dvorsk, *Humanistická etnografie Čech* (Prague: Acta Universitatis Carolinae philosophica et historica monographia, 1975), 44.

Klausenburg (1539–1586), too, wrote in his treatise *The Description of a New Lues Appearing in Moravia (Luis novae in Moravia exortae descriptio)* that peasants of both sexes tended to overdrink to the stage of intoxication, while water has been pushed far off to the kitchen to serve merely for preparing meals.²¹

Beer was an utterly natural part of the contemporary diet. Its weaker variants represented a regular side beverage and were added to soups and other dishes, which even small children consumed. Johann Kopp was convinced that wheat beer is a perfectly appropriate alternative to boiled water for a child weaned from its mother's breast – unlike wine, which he did not recommend for children under the age of seven.²² The significant Bohemian scholar Johann Amos Comenius (1592–1670) expressed a similar opinion in his treatise *Guidelines for the Maternal School (Informatoriū školy mateřské)*. Strictly warning against wine and spirits, he listed both water and beer as suitable for children, alongside bread, butter, puree, and broth.²³ It is interesting in this context that although Kopp never mentions spirits as a beverage, Comenius writes, less than a century later, about them as inappropriate for children. This seems to document the increasing popularity of distilled liquors in the wider social strata of Bohemian society, and elsewhere, of course.

As stated above, Johann Kopp saw the virtue of water in the fact that one cannot have excessive amounts of it or, respectively, cannot get a “water overdose.” This is, naturally, not true in the case of beer or wine, the moderate consumption of which the physicians would recommend instead of water. Their writings therefore abound with regular warnings against excessive drinking of both and pay close attention to the detrimental effects of drunkenness. Drunkards and their misbehavior were the frequent subjects of mockery in contemporary satire, while sermon literature painted the consequences of drunkenness in dismal colors.²⁴ The Ultraquist preacher Johann Štelcar Želetavský (ca. 1530–1600) in his *Spiritual Book on the Great Acts of Our Lord the Omnipotent (Kniha duchovní o velikých skutcích Pána Boha všemohúčího)* defined drunkenness as a sin of abusing God's gifts, specifically wine and grain, through excessive consumption. An attached poem on the diseases caused by alcohol misuse mentions loss of physical strength, involuntary shaking of the head and hands, joint pain, adema

²¹ Thomas Jordanus, *Luis novae in Moravia exortae descriptio* (Frankfurt a. M.: Andreas Wechel, 1580), 7.

²² Kopp von Raumenthal, *Gruntovní a dokonalý regiment zdraví* (see note 4), 43v.

²³ Jan Amos Komenský, *Informatorium školy mateřské*, ed. Antonín Gindely (Prague: Museum Království českého, 1858), 35.

²⁴ See also A. Lynn Martin, *Alcohol, Sex, and Gender in the Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000).

and anasarca, hideous changes in one's appearance, digestive troubles, fevers, unnatural and unpleasant auditory hallucinations, and mental disorders. The closing lines probably describe the manifestations of the last stage of alcoholism, as the author speaks about sleep disorders and horrific hallucinations. The tone of the poem is unambiguous: excessive drinking results in the overall destruction of the human body.²⁵

Johann Kopp states that some midwives tend to splash a neonate with cold water, wine, or beer (most probably with a sound shriek) to make it recuperate – but his view of the given practice is utterly dissenting.²⁶ He is equally critical of adults bathing in icy water; nevertheless noting that people do so and therefore asking them to obey some rules: the water should not be icy, and should reserve cold-water bathing for warm weather. Only young people, up to the age of forty, should dip into cold water, and only those who are well fed, healthy, of jolly temper, and rested. They should also slightly warm up beforehand with exercise or a rubdown. It is desirable to dip fast and not to stay long in the water in order to prevent algidity (hyperthermia). After the bath, they should wipe themselves dry and cover their entire body with oil. Kopp, however, states that since such use of oil is not common in the Czech lands, a thorough rub with towels will do the job just as well.²⁷ However, Adam Huber had a contrary opinion on bathing in cold water; he praised it as immensely beneficial for human health and connected it with the laudable customs of the ancestors, opining that it perfectly suits people of all ages and is especially beneficial to seniors.²⁸

Moreover, Kopp instructs to wash one's hair and head at least once in twenty days, but not more than once a day. He approaches bathing with utmost seriousness and recommends it only after defecation and on an empty stomach. And since his head-and-hair treatment requires soap, he finds it necessary to cover one's eyes with a strip of cloth, to dry oneself thoroughly, and to avoid cool outdoor air afterwards.²⁹ Huber, in addition, advises rinsing the head and hair in cold water three or four times a year. He addresses neither the hygienic nor the cosmetic aspect of bathing but mainly the dietetic benefits. He stresses that the procedure enormously refreshes the organism and prevents hair loss despite the shock of icy water.³⁰

²⁵ Jan Štělcar Želetavský, *Kniha duchovní o velikých skutcích Pána Boha všemohúčího* (Prague: Jan Mladší Jičínský, 1588), I, v-I, r.

²⁶ Kopp von Raumenthal, *Gruntvní a dokonalý regiment zdraví* (see note 4), 38v.

²⁷ Kopp von Raumenthal, *Gruntvní a dokonalý regiment zdraví* (see note 4), 34v.

²⁸ *Regiment zdraví* (see note 11), 100.

²⁹ Kopp von Raumenthal, *Gruntvní a dokonalý regiment zdraví* (see note 4), 35r.

³⁰ *Regiment zdraví* (see note 11), 131.

Even the mere washing of one's head and hair had its dietetic significance for the contemporary physicians, as can be seen in the Latin *regimen sanitatis* issued for the Bohemian King Wenceslas of Luxembourg (1361–1419) by his court physician, Albich of Uničov (ca. 1360–1425). It informed the ruler that he alone was responsible for his health troubles, including head and stomach diseases, as he damaged these organs in the tournaments and hair treatments of his youth.³¹ The above mentioned Bohemian treatise *About the Preservation of Health (O zachování dobrého zdraví)* recommends washing hands after each meal, because it not only removes food remnants from the fingers and palms but can also do good to one's eyesight.³² Adam Huber expected an identical effect from this practice.³³ In connection with intimate hygiene, Johann Kopp stated that one should splash one's face, eyes, and teeth with cold water every morning and on an empty stomach, and found it equally beneficial to accompany it by brushing one's hair. Feet, in his view, require a daily rinse in warm water in order to promote appetite, sensation, and memory.³⁴

III Bathing

Thomas Jordan's work *On Curative Springs and Moravian Spas (O vodách hojedlných neb teplicech moravských)*, printed in 1580, extols Germans and “other kindred nations” for their fondness in gathering in city baths on certain days for the purposes of pastime.³⁵ Enjoying public health resorts was, however, also

³¹ Milada Říhová, *Dvorní lékař posledních Lucemburků* (Prague: Karolinum, 1999), 111. Cf. Id., *Regimen sanitatis pro krále Václava*, Acta Universitatis Carolinae – Historia Universitatis Carolinae Pragensis 35.1-2 (Prague: Carolinum, 1995), 13–28; id., *Regimen sanitatis jako pramen k poznání každodennosti dvou Lucemburků (Václav IV. a Zikmund v naučených Mistra Albíka)*. Mediaevalia Historica Bohemica, 5 (Prague: Historický ústav Akademie věd České republiky, 1998), 91–102.

³² *O zachování dobrého zdraví* (see note 7), M₈r.

³³ *Regiment zdraví* (see note 11), 132.

³⁴ Kopp von Raumenthal, *Gruntovní a dokonalý regiment zdraví* (see note 4), 35r.

³⁵ Tomáš Jordán, *Kníha o vodách hojedlných neb teplicech moravských* (Olomouc: Fridrich Miličtaler, 1580), 86. Editor's note: For a parallel document reflecting on the wide-spread use of spas in the late Middle Ages, see the travelogue by Hans von Waltheim from Halle; see Albrecht Classen, “A Slow Paradigm Shift: Late Fifteenth-Century Travel Literature and the Perception of the World: The Case of Hans von Waltheim (ca. 1422–1479),” to appear in *Mediaevalia et Humanistica*. Consider also the fascinating testimony by Marguerite de Navarre with her famous collection of prose short stories in the vein of Boccaccio's *Decameron*, her *Heptaméron* (1558/1559). For

commonplace in the Czech lands. Johann Kopp writes about it in his book, too, grumbling with his usual disparagement that almost all local baths were of poor standard, and frequenting them was more detrimental than beneficial to human health. He moans that their visitors caused their health problems themselves by ignoring dietetic principles. His severe judgment claims that people mainly should not go to a public bathhouse with their stomachs full, and recommends it only seven hours after the last meal, i.e., when the first stage of digestion in one's belly and stomach is completed. Moreover, people should not attend the facility in a state of physical exhaustion or other weary condition.

The extremely cautious physician even viewed the very way to the baths as risky, if it was too long. His responsible bath visitor first stays in a room with hot air for as long as it suits his nature, does not speak there, and eschews any unnecessary movements, and the really responsible person breathes through a mask pressed against his/her face. He then cools himself in cold water and subsequently can dip in warm water. Although not explicitly stated in the text, the physician probably agreed with repeating the above-described cycle several times. Prior to leaving the baths, the responsible visitors have a masseur properly massage their body and thoroughly dry themselves to prevent catching a cold in the outside air. Returning home, they should first have some quiet rest and only then ought to have food. To Kopp, eating and drinking directly in the baths was altogether unhealthy and therefore inappropriate.³⁶

Clearly, only a few in fact observed such strict dietetic rules in practice. Baths served as spaces for social encounters and, in the case of private bathrooms of opulent residencies, as ideal settings for private political discussions.³⁷ Noble and wealthy inhabitants of the Czech lands also frequented more remote locations noted for their healing springs during the late Middle Ages. The motivation for such travels was mixed; for example, the aristocrat Adam of Waldstein the Younger (ca. 1569–1638) visited Carlsbad, hoping to get some relief from his painful bouts of gout. His surviving diary reads that he arrived in the town on April 17, 1616 and left a month later, in the meantime enjoying baths in the local hot springs and mainly eagerly drinking the omnipresent healing water. His entry

further details about spas and the use of water for medical purposes, see the contribution to this volume by Thomas G. Benedek.

³⁶ Kopp von Raumenthal, *Gruntvní a dokonalý regiment zdraví* (see note 4), 34v.

³⁷ Václav Bůžek, Josef Hrdlička, Pavel Král, and Zdeněk Vybíral, *Věk urozených. Šlechta v českých zemích na prahu novověku* (Prague and Litomyšl: Paseka, 2002), 357.

of April 21 speaks about consuming 45 cups of it, which means that Adam may have gulped an almost unbelievable 16 liters that day.³⁸

Bohuslav Balbín (1621–1688) in his Latin *Miscellany from the History of the Bohemian Kingdom* (*Miscellanea historica regni Bohemiae*, late-1670s) confirms the credibility of these records, stating that the spa visitors usually began treatment with a considerably smaller number of cups, but can eventually reach the total of forty or fifty a day.³⁹ Such amounts of water alone could result in health, and especially digestive complications,⁴⁰ along with those linked to the other risks of spa life, the latter discussed by Wenceslas Payer. In his words, people tend to indulge in a far more unrestrained regimen during the treatment than back home and to view spas as brothels.⁴¹ Elsewhere in his work, he notes – in connection with the “patients” solely pursuing amusement and then leaving with serious diseases – that Nature had certainly created thermal springs for people of feeble health instead of for lechery and sexual pleasure.⁴²

A remarkable reflection of spa life can be found in the work of the humanist author Thomas Mitis (1523–1591), who in the mid-sixteenth century paid a visit to the local second most significant contemporary spa, the north-Bohemian town of Teplitz, and whose poem *On the Teplitz Spa (De thermis Tepliciensibus)* describes the joint frolicking of both sexes in hot water pools. His verses encourage the readers definitely to go there if they desire to please their hearts with crowds of Venus’s daughters – while the beauty of some can allegedly be compared to that of Helen, and the others’ shyness remind one of the Sabine women.⁴³

Thomas Jordan resolved to explore Moravian thermal springs in the period when no resorts in the region could equal the renown of the most established centers, such as Carlsbad and Teplitz. The clientele of the places he describes was merely local – most often consisting of local villagers – and some even lacked standard amenities. Although Jordan focuses on the properties of the springs and the causes of their exceptional qualities (thus in no way differing from the more distinct Italian authors who addressed the same subject two centuries before

³⁸ Deník rudolfského dvořana: Adam mladší z Valdštejna 1602–1633, edd. Marie Koldinská and Petr Matá (Prague: Argo, 1997), 374.

³⁹ Bohuslaus Balbinus, *Miscellanea historica Regni Bohemiae* (see note 15), 62.

⁴⁰ Bůžek, Hrdlička, Král, and Vybíral, *Věk urozených* (see note 36), 358.

⁴¹ Václav Payer z Lokte, *Tractatus de termis Caroli Quarti* (see note 14), 32.

⁴² Václav Payer z Lokte, *Tractatus de termis Caroli Quarti* (see note 14), 42.

⁴³ Thomas Mitis, *De thermis Tepliciensibus*, ed. Bohumil Ryba (Teplice: Krajské muzeum v Teplicích, 1980), 21.

him⁴⁴), he adds some social and cultural details related to their use. The spa guests in Velké Losiny, he observes, would bathe in a rectangular pit hollowed around the spring and fortified by planks. The probably unroofed spa grounds moreover included benches to rest on, and bathtubs regularly filled with the local water by the spa attendants. The spa season there climaxed in spring and early autumn.⁴⁵ The healing waters in the village of Petrov were, then, drawn by hand and poured into troughs equipped with a long fireplace underneath, and the heated water was sluiced to tubs for the guests to sit in. The spas were divided into two parts, one being reserved for noble clients and the other for the somewhat inferior classes. Jordan describes the facility as shabby and almost tumbling down.⁴⁶ As far as the healing spring in Slatinice was concerned, Jordan suggested draining the water into hollowed pits and erecting at least a small building nearby for the visitors' needs.⁴⁷

The Moravian physician also visited the rather well known spa of the Upper Hungarian (today Slovak) city of Trenčianské Teplice. During his sojourn, the place had two large pits fed by the local thermal spring, one serving both men and women of noble ranks and the other the rest. The latter reservoir was reportedly accessible to everyone, indeed – even people suffering from visible forms of skin diseases – and the pit was therefore called “the bath of the poor.” Common people could then retreat into the nearby roadhouse with a barn, while the noble society rested in their own tents erected on the adjoining meadows. Jordan was explicitly critical of the very fact that people must stay in distant tents or some sheds built with their own hands, where they have to face the caprices of weather. He did not have much understanding for a young male who stayed in the thermal water for nine hours either, let alone his companion who spent a whole night there.⁴⁸

It must, however, be noted that sitting in tubs or reservoirs filled with hot water for a long time was characteristic of the therapies recommended by contemporary balneology, and it was a widespread custom to pass such time eating, drinking beer or wine, and conversing or listening to music. Pipers and other musicians performing at the tubs or reservoirs of the early modern spas can there-

⁴⁴ Lorraine Daston and Katharine Park, *Wonders and the Order of Nature. 1150-1750* (original print date; New York: Zone Books, 2001), 135–46.

⁴⁵ Tomáš Jordán, *Kníha o vodách hojitedlných neb teplicech moravských* (see note 34), 189.

⁴⁶ Tomáš Jordán, *Kníha o vodách hojitedlných neb teplicech moravských* (see note 34), 233.

⁴⁷ Tomáš Jordán, *Kníha o vodách hojitedlných neb teplicech moravských* (see note 34), 225.

⁴⁸ Tomáš Jordán, *Kníha o vodách hojitedlných neb teplicech moravských* (see note 34), 255.

fore be seen as predecessors of the bands blaring out on the spa's colonnades of today.⁴⁹

IV Springs, Streams, and the Environment

Jordan recorded that people had an utterly different approach to the healing spring near the Moravian town of Buchlovice. The author talks about small wooden crosses stuck in the soil close to the well and loaves of bread carefully arranged around the spring. His guide explained that sick villagers used to drink the water and, if they recovered, would bring the crosses and the bread as a sacrifice to the “gods of wells,” whoever they might be.⁵⁰

Trust in the existence of various forest creatures, such as fairies and water spirits, is traditional in Bohemian folk culture, and here it probably illustrated a similar example of superstition.⁵¹ One way or another, wells famed for their healing effects represented the subjects of intense Christening efforts. Even a century later, Bohuslav Balbín described dozens of such wells and the miracles experienced in their close vicinity. In 1599, for example, the forests surrounding the village of Deštná near the town of Tábor allegedly saw a poor widow named Kateřina Urbanová having spotted an apparition in the form of an old preying man clad as a monk and accompanied by a boy. The two were said to “help” her jointly to reveal a healing spring whose renown soon became widespread and quite early on received a church built above it which was consecrated to St John the Baptist – the patron saint of spas and the main subject of pilgrimages held on his holiday. Balbín claims to have personally witnessed a procession numbering more than 8,000 pilgrims.⁵² Remarkable testimonies of religious pilgrimages to wells also come from the folklorist and collector, Wenceslas Kroslmus (1790–1861), documenting that in these cases people, too, used to leave objects testifying to their gratitude for their miraculous recovery around the wells.⁵³

⁴⁹ Radim Himmller, *Poznatky o lázních v 16. století v díle Tomáše Jordána z Klauznburka*. Zprávy Vlastivědného muzea v Olomouci, 284 (Olomouc: Vlastivědné muzeum v Olomouci, 2002), 48–56; here 53.

⁵⁰ Tomáš Jordán, *Kníha o vodách hojitedlných neb teplicech moravských* (see note 34), 230.

⁵¹ František Bahenský, Markéta Holubová, Luboš Kafka, Eduard Maur, Alexandra Navrátilová, Jaroslav Otčenášek, Lydia Petráňová, Daniela Stavělová, Lubomír Tyllner, and Jiří Woitsch, *Velké dějiny zemí Koruny české – Lidová kultura* (Prague and Litomyšl: Paseka, 2014), 270.

⁵² Bohuslaus Balbinus, *Miscellanea historica Regni Bohemiae* (see note 15), 64–65.

⁵³ Václav Kroslmus, *Staročeské pověsti, zpěvy, hry, obyčeje, slavnosti a nápěvy*. Část, III (Prague: Plot, 2014), 127, 146.

Also worth mentioning is that water from these famous sources was an interesting commodity. Balbín mentions aristocrats who, being too busy and thus unable to call on the streams gushing around the city of Eger, would dispatch messengers or even carriages every spring to supply them with the local healing water. It was bottled and labelled with the coats-of-arms of a town and, having thus received the hallmark of authenticity, was eventually further merchandized.⁵⁴ Balbín insists that water streaming from the abundant underground sources throughout the Czech lands is sound and beneficial. He notes that some villagers in border areas near Winterberg have *struma urinodosa* (swelling of the neck), countering that they suffer from this unfortunate thyroid deformation because they drink water from Bavarian sources that flow into the Bohemian brooks.⁵⁵ Thomas Jordan then seems to vindicate Balbín's words on the overall popularity of drinking water from a well, writing that everyone in the nearby Moravian village of Suchá Loz prefers it to beer and wine, even though vines thrive on the local slopes.⁵⁶

Physicians active in the following period in general viewed spring water as the best available, and similarly valued the water provided by mountain streams and brooks. Pond and river water was perceived as less healthy, sometimes even patently harmful, equally as in the case of water from town wells. Thomas Jordan does not forget to advise that people despise water brought to town fountains by pipes.⁵⁷ Johann Kopp quite convincingly explains why the Vltava water in Prague is unhealthy to the utmost, and fish from it are therefore unhealthy as well. The reason for this is the sewage system of the big city, directing all waste and other dirt into the Vltava riverbed.⁵⁸

The flowing water of streams and brooks is, naturally, understood as a positive factor. The physician and expert in contemporary mining, Georgius Agricola (1494–1555), attributes to such water a beneficial role in the process of air circulation in the mining town of Joachimsthal. In his words, the local valley used to be very unhealthy since it cumulated mists. As soon as the surrounding forests were cleared and the slopes pierced by mining galleries, although the latter began

⁵⁴ Bohuslaus Balbinus, *Miscellanea historica Regni Bohemiae* (see note 15), 65.

⁵⁵ Bohuslaus Balbinus, *Miscellanea historica Regni Bohemiae* (see note 15), 68.

⁵⁶ Tomáš Jordán, *Kníha o vodách hojitedlných neb teplicech moravských* (see note 35), 272.

⁵⁷ Thomas Jordanus, *Luis novae in Moravia exortae descriptio* (see note 21), 7.

⁵⁸ Kopp von Raumenthal, *Gruntvní a dokonalý regiment zdraví* (see note 4), 100r.

gushing water streams, the unhealthy mists disappeared, and the mountains turned drier and the air clearer and more breathable.⁵⁹

Water present in morasses and swamplands was regarded as utterly unsound due to the conviction that its stale vapors contaminate the air and result in various diseases. Adam Huber notes that breathing such air leads to a stuffy nose, colds, and other respiratory ailments.⁶⁰ Johann Kopp in addition warns against pits filled with water, which serve various artisans – for instance for soaking leather or for paper production. Describing water in these hollows as stinking and turbid, he is of the opinion that the more stinky and more turbid, the worse the health condition is of the artisans working close to it. Next to butchers, those performing “filthy crafts” in his view typically include the above-mentioned tanners as well as skinners, shoemakers, and bridle-makers, i.e., people who either directly tan leather, via soaking, or process it further. In consequence of the difficult and unhealthy working environment, they are, moreover, usually of dull mind or manifestly stupid.⁶¹

Pond keepers could probably expect a similar assessment, since water from the fish-farming reservoirs represented an air-polluting factor. Ponds were characteristic of the sixteenth-century Bohemian landscape, and it therefore comes as no surprise that Johann Kopp lists them as very likely sources of plague infection. An ironic sentence inserted into his work even states that the plentiful local ponds represent a considerably more probable cause of contagion for the inhabitants than the proverbial poisonous breath of a dragon or, even, a basilisk.⁶²

Bohuslav Balbín portrays Bohemia as an almost ideal landscape. The country is set high, which he documents by the fact that no rivers flow into it but instead all currents rise there and flow away. This makes the land fertile and endowed with a fresh and healthy climate. Yet another influence on the great quality of air in the Czech lands is its numerous hills where coniferous and deciduous forests grow which refine and purify the air with their aroma. Large numbers of birds are reportedly well aware of the given assets, for they select it as a place to hibernate, and, due to its elevated position, the country is wide open to winds that literally remove dust and further contribute to its beneficial climate. There is no wonder, then, that its inhabitants are robust and very fit.⁶³ A clean climate and mainly

⁵⁹ Georgius Agricola, *Bermanus aneb rozmluva o hornictví*, ed. Jan Reiniš (Prague: Nakladatelství Československé akademie věd, 1957), 76. See also the contributions to this volume by Debra Stoudt and Thomas G. Benedek.

⁶⁰ *Regiment zdraví* (see note 11), 132.

⁶¹ Kopp von Raumenthal, *Gruntovní a dokonalý regiment zdraví* (see note 4), 30r.

⁶² Kopp von Raumenthal, *Gruntovní a dokonalý regiment zdraví* (see note 4), 143r.

⁶³ Bohuslaus Balbinus, *Miscellanea historica Regni Bohemiae* (see note 15), 9-10.

fresh and unpolluted air have traditionally been perceived as crucial aspects for maintaining good health.

Critical and satirical writings used to mock, for example, physicians as people looking unwell or even chronically ill for they must regularly breathe the odor of bodily excrements.⁶⁴ Comenius, too, mentions this characteristic feature of contemporary diagnostics in his allegory *Labyrinth of the World and Paradise of the Heart* (*Labyrint světa a ráj srdce*) – whose readers follow a traveler as he enters a street lined by physicians' offices and is almost knocked down by negative olfactory perceptions and, most significantly, the overwhelming stench.⁶⁵

Odor or, respectively, unhealthy or poisonous air were firm components of the contemporary imagination concerning contagious diseases, and mainly plague. People would closely relate the dissemination of the latter to the effects of the poisoned *miasma*, and physicians therefore highly stressed the principle of leaving the contaminated places as quickly as possible.⁶⁶ The texts on plague published during the researched era pay extraordinary attention to air, repeatedly advising that a person who heeds his or her well-being should live in a clean climate, far away from the bad smell of mires, cemeteries, and workshops pursuing filthy crafts. Such people should very carefully observe the routine of airing out whenever appropriate and mainly open the windows oriented to the north. If the situation worsens, ventilation should be limited to the minimum, and it is desirable to regulate the air quality inside with fragrant substances. It is also suitable to reduce contact with the outside as much as possible; in fact, one should literally become fortified in one's own dwelling.

The Bohemian humanist Johann Kocín of Kocinét (1543–1610), in his *Conversing on Plague* (*Rozmlauvání o moru*), admits he would never even let his best friend into the house in the case of imminent contagion. It is interesting that Kocín's argument predominantly keeps the well-being of the endangered community in mind for he would not let in a friend – especially if he held a political

⁶⁴ Andrea Carlino, "Petrarch and the Early Modern Critics of Medicine," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 35 (2005): 559–81; here 565.

⁶⁵ Jan Amos Komenský, *Labyrint světa a ráj srdce*, ed. Milan Rosenzweig (Prague: Státní pedagogické nakladatelství, 1955), 58–59.

⁶⁶ Sheldon Watts, *Epidemics and History – Disease, Power and Imperialism* (New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press), 8. See also Vivian Nutton, *The Seeds of Disease: An Explanation of Contagion and the Infection from the Greeks to the Renaissance*. Medical History, 27 (London: Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine, 1983), 1–34; here 18. Jon Arrizabalaga, "Facing the Black Death: Perceptions and Reactions of University Medical Practitioners," *Practical Medicine from Salerno to the Black Death*, ed. Luis García-Ballester, Roger French, Jon Arrizabalaga, and Andrew Cunningham (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 237–88; here 258–59.

position – mainly in order to protect the other person from becoming infected by the author's own breath.⁶⁷

The highly educated and versatile university magister, Pavel Žídek (1413–1471), in his work *The Regimen for King George (Jiřího Správovna)*, outlines a remarkable feature of an ideal city: every house should be equipped with a tall chimney, which would disperse the smell of the lavatories to the environs. These ventilation towers, he opines, would not only be beneficial to health but would also augment the aesthetic impression of such a city. In addition, streets should be clean of mud and waste for the sake of liberating the dwellers from smell and potential diseases.⁶⁸ The commonplace urban reality was, naturally, quite different and such idealistic concepts in fact merely mirrored people's worries in times of increasing fear of contagion. The subject of collective measures in relation to public-space hygiene therefore often reappears not only in the writings of contemporary physicians but also in the regulations issued by either the high establishment or urban authorities in the period of an imminent risk of a plague epidemic.

The third enactment of the 1585 *Plague Order for the Prague Towns (Morový řád pro pražská města)* thus orders the removal of all waste, excrements, and carcasses off the streets, also requiring the cleaning of the puddles and street gutters that usually overflow with filthy water.⁶⁹ Similarly, the *Plague Order Issued by the Governors of the Kingdom of Bohemia (Morový řád vydaný místodržícími království českého)* of 1613 orders in its second article that street gutters be cleansed on a daily basis, and that also the blind drains and waste reservoirs of the individual houses should be kept clean.⁷⁰ The given issue is rather minutely discussed in the 1649 *Plague Order Issued by the Governors of the Kingdom of Bohemia (Morový řád vydaný místodržícími království českého)*. The document orders all businesses that process leather by soaking out to private spaces or directly to the urban periphery, also asking the town dwellers to clean all street gutters on a daily basis and rinse them with fresh water. It forbids polluting streets with spilled or drained-out sewage, which especially concerns water used for washing the bodies of the dead. It prohibits the releasing of any kind of waste, especially animal entrails,

67 Jan Kocín z Kocínétu, *Rozmlauvání o moru* (Prague: Daniel Adam z Veleslavína, 1581), G,b.

68 M. Pavla Žídka Správovna, ed. Zdeněk V. Tobolka (Prague: Historický archiv České akademie císaře Františka Josefa pro vědy, slovesnost a umění, 1908), 54.

69 *Příspěvky k dějinám moru v Zemích českých z let 1531-1746 z archivu Musea Království českého*, ed. Václav Schulz (Prague: Historický archiv České akademie císaře Františka Josefa pro vědy slovesnost a umění, 1902), 29.

70 *Příspěvky k dějinám moru v Zemích českých z let 1531-1746 z archivu Musea Království českého* (see note 68), 63.

into the rivers running through the cities. The quoted plague order suggests that exactly the latter waste was usually drained into the public fountains, where people collected it to either brew beer or prepare meals.⁷¹

The plague orders clearly illustrate the dismal condition of the water supply and sanitation systems present in early modern cities and towns. Water very often came from sources contaminated by organic waste, the omnipresence of which only added to the atmosphere of everyday street traffic. Both contemporary medicine and its administration perceived such toxic water as a substantial agent of harm to the urban environment, for it contributed to epidemics. It is also worth noting that, in contemporary opinion, water represented a significant constituent of the ecosystem, understood as a mutually interconnected structure composed of individual substances and their qualities. If water was rotten or stinky, the authors described it as a source of pathological vapors as well as an agent fatally polluting air. It is therefore symptomatic that the immediate sensual warning sign in such conditions was of an olfactory nature.

Fresh water was, by analogy, an agent that purifies and improves overall living conditions. We can thus firmly argue that this elementary dualist approach to the symbolism of water sources – so characteristic of medieval and early-modern thinking – proves the continuity of the ideas developed already in the pre-modern well into the world of modern western societies, so often discussed by historians. The traditional motif of living and dead water in this context then aptly adds to the current widespread ecological and environmental discussions. Fresh water in these discussions is described as a factor the presence of which can literally bring desolated landscape back to life. While smell in connection with water sources remains the symbol of peril, fresh and spring water is perceived as a substance linked with healthy lifestyle and vitality.

⁷¹ *Příspěvky k dějinám moru v Zemích českých z let 1531-1746 z archivu Musea Království českého* (see note 68), 88.

Albrecht Classen

The ‘Dirty Middle Ages’: Bathing and Cleanliness in the Middle Ages. With an Emphasis on Medieval German Courtly Romances, Early Modern Novels, and Art History: Another Myth-Buster

Modern Misconceptions About the Middle Ages

Most medievalists are only too aware about the many myths that blur ordinary people’s understanding and conceptualization of the Middle Ages, that is, both negative and positive views. Extreme and miserable conditions in everyday life seem to have existed then, since everything must have been so much worse than today, at least according to the global, but certainly wrong, notion that history, hence also cultural history, is determined by a linear, or progressive, development.¹ We can often only shake our heads considering the extent to which mis-

¹ See the illuminating discussion by Otto Borst, *Alltagsleben im Mittelalter*. insel taschenbuch, 513 (Frankfurt a. M.: Insel, 1983); this is now impressively complemented by Peter Dinzelbacher, *Lebenswelten des Mittelalters 1000–1500*. Bachmann Basiswissen, 1 (Badenweiler: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Bachmann, 2010); see now also Albrecht Classen, “Survey of Fundamental Reference Works in Medieval Studies,” *Handbook of Medieval Studies: Terms – Methods – Trends*, ed. id., vol. 1 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2010), XXV–LXVI. See also *Philosophy of History After Hayden White*, ed. Robert Doran. Bloomsbury Studies in American Philosophy (London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013); *Progress, Apocalypse, and Completion of History and Life After Death of the Human Person in the World Religions*, ed. Peter Koslowski (Dordrecht and London: Kluwer Academic, 2002). The discussion about progress in human history is legion, of course. As to progressivism, see <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Progressivism> (last accessed on April 16, 2015). A solid, philosophically oriented discussion of this issue, outlining the contrast between the eschatological worldview in the Middle Ages and beyond and the optimism exuded by the Enlightenment, is offered by Friedrich Rapp, “Fortschritt,” *Lexikon der Geisteswissenschaften: Sachbegriffe – Disziplinen – Personen*, ed. Helmut Reinalter and Peter J. Brenner (Vienna, Cologne, and Weimar: Böhlau, 2011), 194–202; Ronald Wright, *A Short History of Progress* (Edinburgh and London: Canongate, 2009). Of course, the entire concept of ‘progress’ is the result of Enlightenment theory and developed further in the nineteenth century, while the twentieth century experienced a dramatic decline in this optimistic world view; see, for a

Albrecht Classen, The University of Arizona

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conceptions and prejudice dominate popular opinions about the medieval world, which is mostly seen only through the lens of the modern film industry or popular writing. Binary oppositions make good stuff for fantasy, but they are highly detrimental to a rational and critical approach to the study of the pre-modern world based on a careful analysis of the rich panoply of sources and historical objects.²

Aside from truly simplistic perspectives regarding the infantile character, ignorance, boorishness, crudeness, simplicity, or outright incompetence of medieval people, we are often confronted with such absurd notions as that the Black Death eliminated a large portion of the entire population; that medieval thinkers believed the earth was flat; that lords had the right to deflower the wives of their subjects after the wedding (*ius primae noctis*); that the medieval Inquisition had invented and used the most abhorrent torture instruments, as obviously documented by countless but mostly silly modern-day torture museums; that everyone drank wine and beer instead of water because of wide-spread pollution; that most people did not reach an age beyond thirty or forty years; that medieval medicine was largely based on superstition; that virtually everyone in the Middle Ages was stationary and did not travel; that the hygienic conditions were simply horrible and people reeked unbearably because they did not wash and clean themselves properly; that women were totally subjugated and had no rights, living an existence comparable to sex slaves; that the witch craze raged already in the Middle Ages; that the medieval Catholic Church ruled supremely and dominated everyone's personal lives, hence that there were no counter-movements, no heretics, or no atheists³; that peasants barely carved out an existence and were constantly victims of famines; that physical violence was very common and criminals were hardly ever punished; and that husbands commonly employed the chastity belt to control their wives' sexuality during their own absence.⁴

good overviews https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Idea_of_Progress; and <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/progress/> (both last accessed on June 12, 2016).

2 Rémi Brague, *The Legend of the Middle Ages: Philosophical Explorations of Medieval Christianity, Judaism, and Islam*, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (2006; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009).

3 For a significant and solid analysis of atheism in the Middle Ages, see Peter Dinzelbacher, *Unglaube im "Zeitalter des Glaubens": Atheismus und Skeptizismus im Mittelalter* (Badenweiler: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Bachmann, 2009); Paolo Golinelli, *Il Medioevo degli increduli: miscredenti, beffatori, anticlericali. Storia, biografie, diari* (Milan: Mursia, 2009); for a useful text anthology, see Dale McGowan, *Voices of Unbelief: Documents from Atheists and Agnostics* (Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood, 2012).

4 The internet offers numerous good pages where many of those myths about the Middle Ages are well summarized, and often also busted, see, for instance: <http://www.medievalists.net/2014/06/27/15-myths-middle-ages/>; <http://web.maths.unsw.edu.au/~jim/medmyths.html>;

Most stunningly, we also hear from serious scholars in the field of sociology or anthropology that rationality and reasonable operations were the characteristic features only of the early modern age, as if individuals such as Roger Bacon or Albertus Magnus never existed.⁵ At the same time, current youth culture, just as in the age of Romanticism, seems to colonize the Middle Ages once again for its own purposes, playing out its characteristic needs for fantasy somehow situated in the past.⁶

Undoubtedly, mythical concepts about the past have been of greatest influence both on the lay public and also scholars, as the history of literature, the visual arts, music, and architecture especially mostly since the early nineteenth century has demonstrated.⁷ Just as much as the Romantics can be credited with having

<http://listverse.com/2009/01/07/top-10-myths-about-the-middle-ages/>; <http://io9.com/10-worst-misconceptions-about-medieval-life-youd-get-fr-1686799982> (all last accessed on April 5, 2015). To the credit of the internet, as many of these myths actually circulate today, as many efforts are being made to combat them as well in a critical fashion. I have engaged with the last myth myself intensively, see Albrecht Classen, *The Medieval Chastity Belt: A Myth-Making Process*. The New Middle Ages (Hounds mills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, England, and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007). This has led recently to online interviews and newspaper reports: Rita Abundancia for *El País* Jan. 26, 2016: <http://smoda.elpais.com/placeres/la-verdadera-historia-del-cinturon-de-castidad/>; Interviewed by Lauren Oyler for *Vice's Broadly Channel* (online) on the medieval chastity belt: https://broadly.vice.com/en_us/article/chastity-belts-arent-real-tell-it-to-the-firemen-who-rescued-a-woman-from-one. See also the contributions to *Misconceptions about the Middle Ages*, ed. Stephen J. Harris and Bryon L. Grigsby. Routledge Studies in Medieval Religion and Culture, 7 (New York: Routledge, 2008). However, neither hygiene nor medicine, neither baths nor the use of water are addressed here. For a critical examination of medieval cosmography, hence of the alleged concept of the 'flat earth,' see Frank Schleicher, *Cosmographia Christiana: Kosmologie und Geography im frühen Christentum* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2014).

⁵ See, for instance, Don LePan, *The Cognitive Revolution in Western Culture*. Vol. 1: *The Birth of Expectation* (Hounds mills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: The Macmillan Press, 1989). For a range of contrastive opinions, see the contributions to *Which Past, Whose Future?: Treatments of the Past at the Start of the 21st Century: An International Perspective. Proceedings of a Conference Held at the University of York, 20 – 21 May 2005* (2007), ed. Sven Grabow. BAR International Series, 1633 (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2007); see also Charles P. Webel, *The Politics of Rationality: Reason Through Occidental History*. Routledge Studies in Social and Political Thought, 87 (New York: Routledge, 2013).

⁶ Núria Perpinya, *Ruins, Nostalgia and Ugliness: Five Romantic Perceptions of the Middle Ages and a Spoonful of Game of Thrones and Avant-Garde Oddity* (Berlin: Logos Verlag, 2014).

⁷ See the book series edited by Ulrich Müller and Werner Wunderlich, *Mittelalter Mythen*, 1–5 (St. Gall: UVK – Fachverlag für Wissenschaft und Studium, 1996–2008); see also Norma Lorre Goodrich, *Medieval Myths*, Newly rev. and enl. ed. (New York: New American Library, 1977); Patrick J. Geary, *The Myths of Nations: The Medieval Origins of Europe* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002).

rediscovered the value and importance of the pre-modern past, as much they have been responsible for the creation of a strong obfuscation tendency, mostly idealizing that world or casting it in the worst possible light.⁸ The vast number of modern movies and television shows about the Middle Ages, and especially those situated in that era for entertainment purposes, serves as a vivid testimony of the deep impact which mythical notions about the past have had on popular opinion until today, mostly to the detriment of the critical understanding of what that era was all truly about and why it is so important for us today to understand it beyond what popular notions convey. At best there is some curiosity, at worst there is the deep contempt, and sometimes also the ridicule of that past age, none of which proves to be appropriate, historically sensitive, and accurate.⁹

My intentions here are to focus on the significant but often overlooked topic of cleaning, washing, and baths. Accusations of uncleanliness have always worked best in satire or hate speech.¹⁰ Were medieval people really as dirty as Graham Chapman, John Cleese, Terry Gilliam, Eric Idle, Terry Jones, and Michael Palin have made us believe when they produced their famous, but spoofy, *Monty Python and the Holy Grail* movie in 1975?¹¹ What was the level of cleanliness espe-

⁸ Berta Raposo, "Rediscovery of the Middle Ages (Late 18th Century / Turn of the Century)," *Handbook of Medieval Studies: Terms – Methods – Trends*, ed. Albrecht Classen (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2010), vol. 2, 1171–84; see also Ulrich Müller, "Medievalism," *ibid.*, vol. 1, 850–65; Siegrid Schmid, "Medievalism in Modern Children's Literature," *ibid.*, vol. 1, 866–73.

⁹ The number of critical studies on medieval movies is growing steadily; see, for instance, Kevin J. Harty, *The Reel Middle Ages: American, Western and Eastern European, Middle Eastern and Asian Films about Medieval Europe* (Jefferson, NC, and London: McFarland & Company, 1999); John Aberth, *A Knight at the Movies: Medieval History on Film* (New York and London: Routledge, 2003); William F. Woods, *The Medieval Filmscape: Reflections of Fear and Desire in a Cinematic Mirror* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 2014); Michael N. Salda, *Arthurian Animation: A Study of Cartoon Camelots on Film and Television* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 2013). As to the ridiculing of the Middle Ages, see Louise D'Arcens, *Comic Medievalism: Laughing at the Middle Ages*. Medievalism, IV (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2014). As to the Middle Ages on television, see *The Middle Ages on Television: Critical Essays*, ed. Meriem Pages and Karolyn Kinane (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 2015).

¹⁰ Alexandra Cuffel, *Gendering Disgust in Medieval Religious Polemic* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), identifies strong strategies by Muslims, Jews, and Christians in the early Middle Ages to malign the respective other side as dirty and disgusting. I suspect that this has not changed much since then.

¹¹ Rebecca A. Umland and Samuel J. Umland, *The Use of Arthurian Legend in Hollywood Film: From Connecticut Yankees to Fisher Kings*. Contributions to the Study of Popular Culture, 2 (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1996); Juliette Wood, *Eternal Chalice: The Enduring Legend of the Holy Grail* (London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 2008); Gail Ashton and Daniel T. Kline, *Medieval Afterlives in Popular Culture*. The New Middle Ages (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); for an

cially among the aristocrats? What do we know about basic standards of hygiene, hence of health, treatment of excrements, and all those aspects even we moderns normally do not talk about much or regard as too private for public conversations?¹² I will first review what we know about the cultural history of bathing in the pre-modern world, and then turn to a number of examples from the history of medieval German literature to illustrate how we can draw data from those texts to support art-historical evidence. The proverbial saying, very common in American usage, “Throw out the baby with the bath water,” somehow but erroneously associated with the Middle Ages, might tell us all, since the image suggestively confirms how common it was to give babies a bath. This is a popular saying in modern English, yet it is nothing but a cliché, if not a myth, that in the past families tended to use one and the same bath water for every person in the household, and when it was finally the baby’s time, the water must have been so dirty that one could no longer see the person in it.¹³ Such erroneous notion about hygiene in the past are rampant until today all over the world.

This widely-used phrase especially in contemporary English originally derived from the German apothegm created by Thomas Murner in his satirical poem *Narrenbeschwörung* from 1512, directly based on Sebastian Brant’s *Narrenschiff* from 1494, “das Kind mit dem Bade ausschütten.” Poking fun at the fools here on earth who easily cause more damage than good when they try to rectify a situation, he provides the image of the calf which the stupid person kills along with the cow in the process of getting his revenge. Next, he warns his readers not to follow the example of throwing the baby out the tub when the maid wants to empty the dirty water: “Vnt schit das kindt vß mit dem bad / Zuo unfal macht im selber schad” (And pours out the child together with the bath water and thus causes a damage for himself).¹⁴ But the broadsheet depicting this scene only

excellent plot summary and discussion of the critical features of this famous movie, see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monty_Python_and_the_Holy_Grail (last accessed on April 5, 2015).

12 Gerhard Jaritz, “Excrement and Waste,” *Handbook of Medieval Culture*, ed. Albrecht Classen (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2015), vol. 1, 406–14.

13 For the related folk-etymological urban legend see David Wilton, *Word Myths: Debunking Linguistic Urban Legends* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 66–67.

14 For Murner, see Barbara Könneker, *Satire im 16. Jahrhundert: Epoche – Werk – Wirkung. Arbeitsbücher zur Literaturgeschichte* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1991), 68–86; Dirk Jarosch, *Thomas Murners satirische Schreibart: Studien aus thematischer, formaler und stilistischer Perspektive*. Schriftenreihe zur Mediävistik, 9 (Hamburg: Kovač, 2006). For the common American usage of this proverbial saying, see Wolfgang Mieder, “‘(Don’t) Throw the Baby Out with the Bath Water’: The Americanization of a German Proverb and Proverbial Expression,” *Western Folklore* 50.4 (1991, published 1992): 361–400; see also *A Dictionary of American Proverbs*, ed. Wolfgang Mieder (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 33; and the *Cambridge Dictionary of American*

shows a maid who holds a small wooden vessel just big enough for an infant's bath.

Murner had no intention at all to ridicule contemporary hygiene or to comment on the common practice of taking baths at his time. The transformation of this proverb in the following centuries simply reflected the growing ignorance about the Middle Ages and the increased desire to denigrate the past in its basic living conditions. Accusations of uncleanliness have always worked best in satire or hate speech,¹⁵ and people have misunderstood, probably deliberately, and misinterpreted thoroughly the message conveyed by Murner. His remarks cannot be used at all as supporting evidence regarding the allegedly 'dirty' Middle Ages or early modern period (Fig. 1). The opposite is actually the case, especially since the image confirms how common it was to give babies a bath, and that maids were in charge of this task.

We also learn of cleaning methods and practices particularly for infants in the contemporary collection of jest narratives, the anonymous *Till Eulenspiegel* (perhaps by Hermen Bote, first printed in 1510 or 1511), which is, however, mostly filled with accounts of filthy actions defying all principles of hygiene. The shock effect of all those episodes reveals, however, the true degree of hygiene people normally would have expected. Right away, in the first account, after Till having been baptized, the maid carrying the baby, being tipsy, falls off the bridge when bringing it home, soiling it badly in the muck, so they have to wash it in a kettle: "Thus was Eulenspiegel baptized three times in one day" (5).¹⁶

Idioms, ed. Paul Heacock (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 14. For more details on the German tradition, see Simone Loleit, *Wahrheit, Lüge, Fiktion; das Bad in der deutschsprachigen Literatur des 16. Jahrhunderts* (Bielefeld: transcript, 2008).

¹⁵ Alexandra Cuffel, *Gendering Disgust in Medieval Religious Polemic* (see note 10), identifies strong strategies by Muslims, Jews, and Christians in the early Middle Ages to malign the respective other side as dirty and disgusting. I suspect that this has not changed much since then.

¹⁶ *Till Eulenspiegel: His Adventures*, trans., with introduction and notes, by Paul Oppenheimer (1991; New York and London: Routledge, 2001). For a critical review of the relevant scholarship and an analysis of the text, see Albrecht Classen, *The German Volksbuch: A Critical History of a Late-Medieval Genre*. Studies in German Language and Literature, 15 (Lewiston, Queenston, and Lampeter: Edwin Mellen Press, 1995), 185–212. See now Herbert Blume, "Hermann Bote – Autor des Eulenspiegelbuches? Zum Stand der Forschung," id., *Hermann Bote: Braunschweiger Stadtschreiber und Literat: Studien zu seinem Leben und Werk*. Braunschweiger Beiträge zur deutschen Sprache und Literatur, 15 (Bielefeld: Verlag für Regionalgeschichte, 2009), 211–35 (orig. 1994). A much later, but still pre-modern example of a scientific examination of hygiene can be found in the learned treatise by Bernard Lynch, *A guide to health through the various stages of life: Wherein are Explained, I. The different Degrees and Changes of Age, the principal and inevitable Causes of Old Age, and finally of our Dissolution; with a Chronological and Historical*

Much later in the collection of tales, we also hear of Eulenspiegel frequenting a bath house in Hanover which the owner has called “House of Cleansing” in order to brag about his fanciful establishment. But the rogue does not only intend to clean his outer body, he also cleanses his inner body and “deposited a great pile of shit in the water trough in the middle of the bathing room, creating a stink through the whole place” (143). The ensuing bickering between Eulenspiegel and the owner does not end well, although the latter can force him out of the bath. Certainly, he insists that his house of cleansing excludes cleaning the inner body: “One usually does your sort of cleaning in the lavatory. This is a house of cleaning-by-sweating – and you are turning it into a shithouse” (143). But Eulenspiegel gets the better of him since he uses the privacy of the dressing room in order to leave more of his shit behind, telling the proprietor: “Dear Keeper of the Baths, in this room I cleansed myself thoroughly for the first time. You’ll be thinking about me a great deal before noon. I’m leaving this place” (144).

Bathing and Cleaning in the Middle Ages: Cultural-Historical Perspectives

It is a very easy task to project horrible images of the past, drawing from a highly selected body of samples drawn randomly from a variety of texts, and reaching, hence, conclusions that sell well on the modern-day book market or in the movies without being carefully tested and examined.¹⁷ The internet is filled with webpages that bemoan the almost complete absence of bathing hygiene in the Middle Ages, although the opposite might have been the case. We hear, however,

brief Account of long Lives from before the Flood to this present Time. II. The Nature, Properties, Qualities, and Influence of Air. Of Aliments; the Choice of them; their Power upon Human Bodies, with their good and bad Effects. Of Sleeping and Waking; of Motion and Rest; of Retention and Excretion; and of the Passions of the Mind. III. Of the Definitions, Diagnosticks, Prognosticks, and Curative Indications, both Medicinal and Dietetical, of Acute and Chronical Diseases incident to Human Bodies; with the Nature and Use of Bathing and Frictions. The whole illustrated with useful annotations, methodically and succinctly digested, and confirmed by the Authority of the most celebrated Authors, both Ancient and Modern (London: printed for the author, 1744, and several times thereafter).

¹⁷ Although it would not deserve, really, to be cited because of its bad quality, for a good example of how not to write about the Middle Ages, see Kathy Allen, *The Horrible, Miserable Middle Ages: The Disgusting Details About Life During Medieval Times* (Mankato, MN: Capstone Press, 2010). Worst, this is a book for young readers!

of numerous comments, such as by Erasmus of Rotterdam, writing in 1526, that the culture of public bath houses was declining rapidly at his time. But could this not also have been the consequence of private citizens increasingly building their own bath rooms in their urban houses?¹⁸ And would we not have to consider the consequences of the Black Death and syphilis the causes of which were commonly associated with the bath house since the sixteenth century, which led to a wide-spread closing of those institutions?¹⁹ Moreover, since research has not yet focused much on the topic of medieval and early modern bath cultures and washing, popular writers addressing the lay audience face no serious challenges to making bold, but rather outrageous and inflammatory, statements about pre-modern culture.²⁰

We know, or can learn, however, considerably more about baths and bathing in the Middle Ages than is commonly assumed. Even though the highly sophisticated bath culture in late antiquity did not continue at the same level during the Middle Ages,²¹ it would be erroneous to claim that there was no bathing culture then or that it simply died out because of barbarous conditions. Most monasteries placed significant emphasis on good working baths because hygiene within the community was important. We know of numerous architectural plans, such as the blueprint for the monastery of St. Gall, that included baths as a matter of fact. Royal courts always included bath houses, as already confirmed in the *Lex Baiuvariorum* (8th c.).²²

¹⁸ See the good discussion online at: www.medievalists.net/2013/04/13/did-people-in-the-middle-ages-take-baths/ (last accessed on April 20, 2015). The bibliography there proves to be very helpful.

¹⁹ <http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Badehaus> (last accessed on April 20, 2015).

²⁰ See, for instance, early attempts by the contributors to *500 – 1800: Hause, Wohnen, Residieren*, ed. Ulf Dirlmeier. Geschichte des Wohnens, 2 (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags Anstalt, 1988); for a museum-based study on this topic, see now Daniela Rösing, *Von der Badstube zum Badekabinett: Badekultur im Mittelalter und in der frühen Neuzeit* (Zülpich: Römerthermen, 2014).

²¹ Werner Heinz, *Römische Thermen* (Munich: Hirmer, 1983); Werner Eck, "Die Wasserversorgung im römischen Reich: sozio-politische Bedingungen, Recht und Administration," *Geschichte der Wasserversorgung: Pergamon, Recht/Verwaltung, Brunnen/Nymphaen, Bauelemente*, vol. II (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 1987), 51–101; Inge Nielsen, *Thermae et balnea: The Architecture and Cultural History of Roman Public Baths* (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 1990); Fikret K. Yegül, *Baths and Bathing in Classical Antiquity* (New York: Architectural History Foundation, 1992); Ernst Künzl, *Die Thermen der Römer* (Stuttgart: Theiss, 2013). For baths in medieval literature, see also the contribution to this volume by Rosa A. Perez; and for baths in the early modern age, see also the contributions by David Tomiček and Thomas G. Benedek.

²² For toilets in medieval monasteries, see the contribution to this volume by Belle S. Tuten. For the latest historical-architectural research on this topic, see the contributions to *Aborte im Mittelalter und der Frühen Neuzeit: Bauforschung, Archäologie, Kulturgeschichte*, ed. Olaf Wagener.

Throughout the early and the high Middle Ages we hear of bath installations in rural communities, and late medieval cities always reported of their own bath houses.²³ A good example can be found in the verse narrative “The Mayor and the Prince” by Heinrich Kaufringer (ca. 1400), where the mayor’s wife invites the mysteriously wealthy student in their town of Erfurt to her house, where they both first enjoy a bath, until they are caught *in flagrante* by the husband, who then handles the situation in a most rational fashion.²⁴

Artists increasingly worked with the motif of the bath house, such as Conrad Kyeser in his treatise on military siege machines and other gadgets, *Bellifortis* (ca. 1420), where we observe an elaborate example of a steam bath (Göttingen, Cod. ms. philos. 63, 114v), though they then mostly intended to entertain their audiences with erotic allusions.²⁵ Another excellent example would be the *Hausbuch* in the collection of Burg Wolfegg, created about 1480, where the artist/s

Studien zur internationalen Architektur- und Kunstgeschichte, 117 (Petersberg: Imhof, 2014), such as G. Ulrich Großmann, “Zur Baugeschichte des Abtritts,” *ibid.*, 13–22, und Olaf Wagener, “Wo, bitte, ist denn hier die Toilette?: Zur Lage des Aborts in der mittelalterlichen Burg und der Frage nach der Ableitung der Fäkalien,” *ibid.*, 122–32. As to the latrines in St. Gall, see Alfons Zettler, “Stille Örtchen? Die Latrinen auf dem karolingischen Klosterplan der Stiftsbibliothek St. Gallen,” *ibid.*, 238–46.

23 Gerhard Jaritz, “Bad,” *Lexikon des Mittelalters*, vol. I: *Aachen bis Bettelordenskirchen* (Munich and Zurich: Artemis Verlag, 1980), fasc. 7, 1331–33. See also the subsequent entries on Islamic baths, the master of the bath, and the culture of bath. The medical importance of special baths is emphasized by H.-E. Korn, “Badewesen,” *ibid.*, 1340–41. He refers, for instance, to Arnald of Villanova, Jean de St. Amand, Peter of Eboli, and Giovanni Michele Savonarola.

24 Albrecht Classen, *Love, Life, and Lust in Heinrich Kaufringer’s Verse Narratives*. Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 467 (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2014), no. 4, 19–24.

25 See the digitized manuscript at <http://daten.digitale-sammlungen.de/~db/0009/bsb00090291/images/index.html?fip=193.174.98.30&seite=76&pdfseitex=1>. For Kyeser, see *Konrad Kyeser: Bellifortis; Clm 30150*, ed. Ulrich Montag. Patrimonia, 137 (Munich: Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, 2000); see also the convenient article online at http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Konrad_Kyeser (both last accessed on April 15, 2015). Both humanists and Renaissance thinkers recognized in the bath a profound symbol of a universal rejuvenation, as most famously expressed by Cola di Rienzo who took his public bath in Rome on August 1, 1347, resorting to the mysterious tub out of porphyry used by Emperor Constantine when he was baptized as a Christian. See Reiner Dieckhoff, “antique – moderni: Zeitbewußtsein und Naturerfahrung im 14. Jahrhundert,” *Die Parler und der schöne Stil 1350–1400: Europäische Kunst unter den Luxemburgern*, ed. Anton Legner. Ein Handbuch zur Ausstellung des Schnütgen-Museums in der Kunsthalle Köln, 3 (Cologne: Schnütgen-Museum, 1978), 67–93; here 85–88; Marilena Amerise, *Il battesimo di Costantino il Grande: storia di una scomoda eredità*. Hermes: Zeitschrift für klassische Philologie, 95 (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2005).

included impressive images of bath houses and people enjoying their company while sitting in the water.²⁶

The artist/s of the famous Bible produced some time during the 1390s for King Wenceslas (1361–1419), son of Emperor Charles IV (1316–1378), often depict the ruler, though only in marginal drawings accompanying the sacred text, sitting on a chair or a bench in a bath house – the architecture is barely indicated or actually absent – entirely naked, being washed, cleaned, or padded, such as when he is holding his arms outstretched while two maids work on him, providing him with a massage. Undoubtedly, here we face a significant iconographic symbolism pertaining to love, marriage, loyalty, and trust, but also specific references to classical concepts of love (Ovid's *Metamorphosis*), but this does not diminish the information contained in those images regarding the material conditions at a royal household, including the bath room and personal need of washing. Royal hygiene was a luxury, but also a requirement, so it was not at all embarrassing or surprising for the artist/s to portray his or their patron in such an intimate scene.²⁷

One example would be fol. 10v (vol. 1), where we discover a naked man, undoubtedly the king himself, sitting on a bench, while a maid behind him, seated on a small tub, takes care of his hair, perhaps cleaning it of lice, while another maid, standing in front of him, has brought a basket, maybe filled with refreshments. Both maids are dressed in thin bath robes.²⁸ A similar bath maid can be found on fol. 21r (vol. 1), again at the bottom, holding a wooden vessel, but the male figure sitting in the opposite medallion is not situated in a bath (blue and gold checkered background). The same scene appears at the bottom of fol. 85r (vol. 1), this time with a gold background. We find yet another bath maid at the bottom of fol. 32r (vol. 1), holding the vessel in her left hand and a fan or a

²⁶ Albrecht Classen, *Sex im Mittelalter: Die andere Seite einer idealisierten Vergangenheit. Literatur und Sexualität* (Badenweiler: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Bachmann, 2011), 26–33; Christoph Graf zu Waldburg Wolfegg, *Venus and Mars: The World of the Medieval Housebook*, trans. from the German and ed. by Almuth Seebohm (Munich and New York: Prestel, 1998); for a digitized image of this particular scene, see http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hausbuch_%28Schloss_Wolfegg%29#/media/File:Hausbuch_Wolfegg_18v_19r_Badehaus.jpg; cf. also the excellent introductory study online at: http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hausbuch_%28Schloss_Wolfegg%29 (both last accessed on April 15, 2015).

²⁷ *Bible. Old Testament. German. Wenzelsbibel. 1390. Codices selecti phototypice impressi*, 70 (Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1981), 8 vols.

²⁸ *Die Wenzelsbibel: Erläuterungen zu den illuminierten Seiten* von Michaela Krieger and Gerhard Schmidt, together with Elfriede Gaál and Katharina Hranitzky (Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1996), 18.

pad in her right hand, just as is the case already on fol. 5r (vol. 1). But a scene depicting an actual bath was not included. The same figure appears on the right margin on fol. 57r (vol. 1), at the bottom of fol. 71v (vol. 1), or at the bottom of fol. 128r (vol. 2).

Bath maids treating and/or washing the man's hair can be found on fol. 47v (vol. 1). His legs are naked, but the scene does not imply any erotic elements, but instead emphasizes bodily hygiene. One of the most impressive bath maids is depicted in the initial for the letter 'u' on fol. 130r (vol. 2; see Schmidt, 68). A bath maid holding two buckets in her hands appears on fol. 139r (vol. 2), facing the viewer. The bath maid on fol. 150v (vol. 2) stands on the back of a wild man, while she firmly holds on to the red and blue vines extending into both directions. Another one stands all alone on fol. 151r (vol. 2), although a long scroll connects her with the rest of the marginal decorations.

The bath maid at the bottom of fol. 160r (vol. 2) is presented in a much more revealing fashion, her body barely covered by a see-through dress, basically showing her pudendum and breasts. And this as a decoration for a page in the Old Testament, here covering the account of Balak and Balaam (Num. 24: 10)!

A truly delightful bath scene appears in the initial for the letter 'D,' where two maids wash the king's hair (fol. 174v, vol. 2). While the maid on the left massages his hair, the maid on the right is holding the bucket with water. Wenceslas has placed his hands in front of his face in order to protect his eyes during the washing process. He is completely nude, while the maids are clothed in their thin white dresses. Again, the focus rests on the washing process, not on the erotic element. Just on the opposite page, fol. 175r (vol. 2), which shows us the scene with horned Moses inspired by God, talking to his people, the Israelites (Dtn 1: 1), another bath maid figures on the left margin, holding up the wooden bucket, upon which the fan is oddly balanced, and upon which a bird is seated. At the bottom of fol. 94r (vol. 5) we see the king seated on a blanket somewhere outside in a rocky landscape, wearing only his underwear. A bath maid standing behind him, now in a purple dress, holds the bucket in her right hand while massaging his hair with the other hand. The scene is intriguingly framed by two wild men holding banners in one hand and a coat of arms in the other.

Two bath maids, now dressed in white, walk toward each other at the bottom of fol. 98r (vol. 5). A wild man standing upright separates the two from each other. A beautiful bath maid appears in the initial for the letter 'U' in the right-hand column on fol. 108r (vol. 5). She is alone, but holds the typical bucket. A blue cloth is tied around her waist. Significantly, a beautiful fountain made out of yellowish stone and consisting of a little turret in the middle surrounded by a wall, the entire scene set in a forest with blooming trees, can be found in the right column of fol. 119r (vol. 5). There are, however, no maids and no utensils

characteristic of baths. The typical bucket, by contrast, appears all by itself in the bottom right medallion on fol. 128r (vol. 5). While vol. 8 is missing many of the planned illuminations, the very first page, fol. 112r, begins with the initial for the letter 'U' showing two bath maids looking at each other. The artist depicted them wearing a cap covering their hair and a blue cloth around their waist, and as barefoot, both holding the usual utensils for the bath room.

Most importantly, we find the motif with King Wenceslas in the bath also on the first page of the famous manuscript containing the *Golden Bull* (1356; copied in 1400 on behalf of the king; today Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Codex Vindobonensis 338).²⁹ However, here the king is fully dressed in royal garb, while the maid to his right is supposed to represent his wife Sophie of Bavaria, also known as Euphemia/Offney. All these elements belong to the characteristic emblems of the Wenceslas manuscripts.³⁰ There are no other pictorial elements reflecting bathing in this famous legal document, as far as I can tell. Nevertheless, to conclude, taking both manuscripts into view, bathing culture was, hence, ubiquitous, even though here mostly represented through the bath maids and the king being treated by them. To be sure, the bath maid constitutes an artistic motif as important as the various types of birds, leaves, and grotesque creatures, all features that determined the entire pictorial program of the *Wenceslas Bible*, and somewhat also the *Golden Bull*. Nevertheless, we can still recognize the material culture behind those symbols.

Bathing and personal health care were, in other words, standard aspects, especially among the aristocracy and royalty, which some nineteenth-century scholars already had noticed, but which seems to have been forgotten since then.³¹ Only recent investigations have uncovered a wide spectrum of medical

²⁹ *Die goldene Bulle: König Wenzels Handschrift. Vollständige Faksimile-Ausgabe im Originalformat des Codex Vindobonensis 338 der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek*, commentary by Armin Wolf. Codices Selecti. Phototypice Impressi, Facsimile, LX, Commentarium, LX (Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1977), 41–42.

³⁰ Wolf, *Die goldene Bulle* (see note 27), 42, suspects that the bathing scene reflects the establishment of a new secret knightly order, the *Cavalieri bagnati*. See also the seminal study by Josef Krasa, *Die Handschriften König Wenzels IV*, trans. into German by Herta Soswinski (Vienna: Forum Verlag, 1971), 76–78, et passim.

³¹ Horatio Mahomed, *The Bath: A Concise History of Bathing as Practised by Nations of the Ancient and Modern World* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1843), 11–13; Georg Zappert, "Über das Badewesen mittelalterlicher und späterer Zeit," *Archiv für Kunde Österreichischer Geschichtsquellen* 21 (1859): 3–166; see also the catalogue *Kulturgeschichte des Badens und der Bäder: Sammlung Dr. W. A. Luz. Altonaer Museum, Sonderausstellung 1. bis 30. April 1953* (Berlin-Neukölln: E. Schmidt, 1953); cf. further the truly seminal study by Alfred Martin, *Deutsches Badewesen in vergangenen Tagen: nebst einem Beitrag zur Geschichte der deutschen Wasserheilkunde* (1906; Munich:

manuals and corresponding illustrations that confirm how seriously bathing and cleaning were treated in the Middle Ages after all.³² Many different medieval poets from various periods regularly included references to baths into their works and presented them as standard equipments at least of noble houses.³³

A Negative Example in Middle High German Literature: *Mauritius von Craûn*

If we take the example of the Middle High German verse narrative *Mauritius von Craûn* (ca. 1220–1240), our first impression might be rather negative since certain features seem to confirm some of the worst modern notions about the medieval approach to cleanliness and personal hygiene.³⁴ The protagonist organizes a huge tournament in order to impress his lady, the Countess of Beamunt, and to carry out her demand to witness such an event before she would be willing to submit to his erotic wishes. Mauritius successfully achieves his goal, unhorses all of his opponents, and enjoys highest respect for his knightly accomplishments. But when the time has come to meet his beloved and enjoy a night in private

Diederichs, 1989), which continues to be a very rich repertoire of highly relevant material for this topic. See also Vladimír Krížek, *Kulturgeschichte des Heilbades* (Leipzig: Ed. Leipzig, 1990).

32 Jill Caskey, “Steam and ‘Sanitas’ in the Domestic Realm: Baths and Bathing in Southern Italy in the Middle Ages,” *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*

58.2 (June, 1999): 170–95; I. van Dam, Fabiola, “Permeable Boundaries: Bodies, Bathing and Fluxes, 1135–1333,” *Medicine and Space: Body, Surroundings and Borders in Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, ed. Patricia A. Baker, Han Nijdam, and Karine van ‘t Land (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 117–43. Many of the other contributions to the present volume confirm this observation from different historical and scientific perspectives.

33 See the contribution to this volume by Rosa A Perez, who studies Marie de France’s *lai* “Equitain” and the anonymous thirteenth-century Occitan romance *Flamenga*. For medical-historical perspectives, see the contribution by Thomas G. Benedek, also in this volume.

34 Heimo Reinitzer, ed., *Mauritius von Craûn*. Altdeutsche Textbibliothek, 113 (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 2000); see also the commentary and epilogue to my edition and translation, *Moritz von Craûn* (Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam, 1992). Cf. also *Mauricius von Craûn. Mittelhochdeutsch, neuhochdeutsch*. Nach dem Text von Edward Schröder herausgegeben, übersetzt und kommentiert von Dorothea Klein (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1999). This is a parallel translation, and the commentaries and explanations are very similar to those in my book. The only noteworthy difference between Klein’s and my own approach consists of the alternative text edition used for the translation (Prenzel versus Schröder). For the most comprehensive study of this verse narrative so far, see now Hubertus Fischer, *Ritter, Schiff und Dame. Mauricius von Craûn: Text und Kontext* (Heidelberg: Winter, 2006).

with her, he does nothing to prepare himself appropriately. He does not change his outfit, which is in a very bad shape after a whole day fighting in many jousts, and he does not wash himself. In fact, his face is still covered with dried blood. This fact is mentioned only later when the entire situation suddenly turns into the opposite, leaving Mauritus deeply disappointed. But at first, after the tournament, he has to wait for his lady, who cannot arrive as scheduled because her husband is still awake as a result of his profound feelings of guilt because he had killed a knight in the first joust early in the morning.

Upon the chambermaid's recommendation, Mauritus rests his head in her lap and falls asleep, but at that very moment the countess arrives, and she quickly decides, witnessing her lover slumbering, to reject him and to abandon all plans to enjoy courtly love outside of the bonds of marriage. After a brief discussion with the maid about the values of courtly love altogether, she abruptly leaves the room. Mauritus, waking up from a nightmare, is so furious about this negative development that he first sends the maid into the marital bedroom to appeal to the lady on his behalf, and then, having been denied his wishes, pushes his way in after all and appears like a ghost. He pretends to be the soul of the killed knight, bent on taking the husband, the Count of Beamunt, with him to hell as a punishment for his bad performance during the tournament. This scares the poor man so badly that he jumps out of bed and tries to escape, but he hits his shin so hard that he faints from the pain. This then allows Mauritus to lie down in bed next to the Countess, which subsequently forces her to grant him her 'love,' though afterwards he returns to her the ring which she had given him previously and abandons her for good, leaving her behind deeply saddened and hopeless, which signals the end of courtly love and courtly culture altogether.³⁵ Voicing only very subtle criticism, the narrator merely comments on the protagonist's appearance at night in the following way: "er was gezieret niht ze vil" (1530; he was not overly groomed), meaning that he lacked all good manners and did not conform at all to the standards of courtly fashion. Moreover, his face is covered with dried blood which had flown out of his wounds that he had received during

³⁵ Albrecht Classen, "Mauritus von Craün and Otto von Freising's *The Two Cities*: 12th- and 13th-Century Scepticism about Historical Progress and the Metaphor of the Ship," *German Quarterly* 79.1 (2006): 28–49; id., *Sexual Violence and Rape in the Middle Ages: A Critical Discourse in Premodern German and European Literature*. Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture, 7 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2011), 53–82; id., "Courtliness and Transgression at Arthur's Court: With Emphasis on the Middle High German Poet Neidhart and the Anonymous Verse Novella *Mauritus von Craün*," *Arthuriana* 20.4 (2010): 3–19; id., "From Scandal to the Scandalous: From the Fable to Moriz von Craun," 'Minne twinget sunder slac': *New Studies Addressing Mauritus von Craün*," *Leuvense Bijdragen* 101 (2015/appeared in 2016): 1–20.

the day-long tournament. Especially his eyebrows are crusted over with old blood (1531–34),³⁶ and in his fury he actually looks like “ein lewe nâch der spîse” (1537; a lion after its meal). Moreover, Mauritius’s leg covers have come lose and hit the floor with every step. Although his in this terrible shape, he daringly approaches the marital bed and so naturally scares the horrified count almost to death, who cannot even voice a prayer, being speechless out of fear (1554). Mauritius’s body shows many marks of his involvement in the tournament (1557–59), so it is little wonder that the naive count believes what the stranger claims, that is, to be the soul of the slain knight (1569–74), and so knocks himself out in his attempt to escape.

The countess fully understands that Mauritius has arrived and has then placed himself next to her in the bed. She realizes that she has to submit to his wishes, being deprived of her husband’s protection (1603–08), but since Mauritius at first does not make any move, she begins to kiss (1609) and to embrace him (1613), which then leads over to their love-making which he has imposed on her. We are not told anything else about his appearance, that is, his total lack of hygiene and cleanliness, especially since the narrative then comes to a fairly rapid closure, with the love affair having failed entirely. Scholarship has also ignored this fact or remarked only that the blood-covered face was an important element in the burlesque orchestrated by Mauritius to scare the husband out of his mind.³⁷ We might argue that the protagonist’s lack of personal hygiene foreshadows his failure to pursue courtly love and to achieve happiness with his beloved.

Counter-Examples

This example might support common concepts about the ‘dirty’ Middle Ages, but we would then ignore the specific narrative context in which the protagonist must act in the role of the ghost because he wants to achieve his goal to secure his sexual reward from the countess at all costs. In fact, when we turn to the genre of courtly romances, we encounter very different situations since the theme of baths and washing emerges there more often than not. Joachim Bumke, for instance, alerts us to the common practice in virtually all castles of having separate bath

³⁶ Fischer, *Ritter, Schiff und Dame* (see note 31), 209, reads the key word in the manuscript as “stirnen” and not as “stirne,” hence translates it as forehead and not as eye-brows.

³⁷ Fischer, *Ritter, Schiff und Dame* (see note 32), 209. Klein, ed. and trans., has no comments on this curious passage, while I noted this astonishing fact in the commentary to my translation (136).

houses, as reflected, for instance, in Der Stricker's verse narrative "Der nackte Bote" (ca. 1220–1240).³⁸

In Konrad Fleck's version of the pan-European story of *Flore und Blanscheflur* (ca. 1220) we hear of a complex and sophisticated pumping system to lead hot water to the upper floors of a tower from where it was then channeled down to the rooms below.³⁹ The poet obviously intended to underscore how much such bathroom technology was the standards at least amongst the highest social classes. A chronicler reports of an accident at the castle Persenbeug in Austria (near Pöchlarn, on the Danube) where the wooden structure of the living quarters collapsed in 1045. At that time the German Emperor Henry III was visiting the Countess Richilde von Ebersberg, and by accident the floor suddenly gave way underneath them, so they fell into a bathhouse below. Much later, another chronicler, Count Froben Christof von Zimmern (d. 1567) remarked that the reason for the aristocrats to move away from their castles to the cities was that there they had a much easier time to get to the bath houses and to enjoy a higher level of hygiene.⁴⁰ In other words, we know of numerous examples of bathrooms and bath houses in the Middle Ages, even though the historical sources do not always shed much light on them since they represented the private spaces. Just as latrines and toilets are mentioned only rarely, so did baths probably not enjoy great significance in pre-modern narratives, which does not, however, tell us much about their prevalence or the lack thereof.⁴¹

38 Joachim Bumke, *Höfische Kultur: Literatur und Gesellschaft im hohen Mittelalter* (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1986), 160–61. See also Herrand von Wildonie's *Von dem blözen keiser* (ca. 1260); for much more information, see Martin, *Deutsches Badewesen* (see note 29), 144–71.

39 Christine Putzo, *Konrad Fleck, 'Flore und Blanscheflur': Text und Untersuchung*. Münchener Texte und Untersuchungen zur deutschen Literatur des Mittelalters, 143 (Berlin, Munich, and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2015), vv. 4224–69.

40 Bumke, *Höfische Kultur* (see note 35), 160–61. The literature on medieval castles, the availability of furniture, water, heating systems, etc. is very rich and does not need to be listed here in detail. For the older research, see Bumke, vol. 2, 820–21. See also Otto Borst, *Alltagsleben im Mittelalter*. Insel Taschenbuch, 513 (Frankfurt a. M.: Insel Verlag, 1983), 282–91. Most valuable now proves to be the volume *Aborte im Mittelalter* (see note 20). Daniel Burger, "Daran erkenn' ich meine Pappenheimer!" – Das Handwerk der Nachtkärrner oder Abtritt-Räumer in der Reichsstadt Nürnberg," *ibid.*, 197–205, refers to a similar accident in Erfurt in 1184 (197).

41 Daniel Furrer, *Wasserthron und Donnerbalken: Eine kleine Kulturgeschichte des stillen Örtchens* (Darmstadt: Primus Verlag, 2004); Paolo Squatriti, *Water and Society in Early Medieval Italy: AD 400-1000* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998); for the post-medieval period, see Georges Vigarello, *Concepts of Cleanliness: Changing Attitudes in France Since the Middle Ages*, trans. Jean Birrell. Past and Present Publications (1985; Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press; Paris: Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, 1988).

Perhaps not by accident, Marguerite de Navarre (1492–1549), in her *Heptaméron* (first printed in 1558 and 1559), refers to the famous spa town of Cauterets in the Pyrenees only in the introduction because a natural catastrophe forces all guests to flee from there in order to save their lives, many of them unsuccessfully because the massive rain storm makes the passage of rivers impossible. Some of the survivors gather in an abbey and, while waiting for a bridge to be rebuilt which would allow them to travel home, they tell each other stories, in close parallel to Boccaccio's *Decameron* (ca. 1351).⁴² The spa, as important as it might have been for the protagonists to enjoy a healing place or simply a location of luxury, does not matter significantly in the subsequent narrative developments, but it provided Marguerite with a convenient starting point for her collection of tales because many people from France, Spain, and other countries had assembled there, “some to drink the waters, some to bathe in them, and some to be treated with the mud. These are all very remarkable cures, so remarkable that patients long given up by their physicians go home completely restored to health” (60).

Generally we might assume that bathing and cleaning were important, without any doubt, but poets did not linger much on those aspects more than necessary. Or did they? Dirt, filth, human excrement, and so on triggered great disgust already then, as the first story of the second day indicates where a courtly lady suffers from utmost indignity because she is badly soiled when using the toilet while visiting a Franciscan monastery.⁴³ But this does not reveal anything about the bathing culture there, or at her own castle. All we can say with respect to Marguerite's *Heptaméron* is that there was a clear understanding of public baths and spas, that they obviously existed at special places and were frequented by many people from near and far.

Jumping back in time, we learn that already Charlemagne was greatly enjoying bathing and swimming. As his biographer Einhard says: “[Charlemagne] enjoyed the exhalations from natural warm springs, and often practised swimming, in which he was such an adept that none could surpass him; and hence it

⁴² *L'Heptaméron* (Paris: Garnier Frères, 1964). For a good English translation, see Paul A. Chilton, *The Heptameron* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1984); see Jonathan A. Reid, *King's Sister – Queen of Dissent: Marguerite of Navarre (1492–1549) and her Evangelical Network* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2009); Albrecht Classen, “Consequences of Bad Weather in Medieval Literature: From *Apollonius of Tyre* to Marguerite de Navarre's *Heptaméron*,” *arcadia* 45.1 (2010): 3–20.

⁴³ Elizabeth Chesney Zegura, “Maternal Death and Patriarchal Succession in Renaissance France,” *Death in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times: The Material and Spiritual Conditions of the Culture of Death*, ed. Albrecht Classen. Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture, 16 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2016), 457–89.

was that he built his palace at Aix-la-Chapelle, and lived there constantly during his later years until his death. He used not only to invite his sons to his bath, but his nobles and friends, and now and then a troop of his retinue or body guard, so that a hundred or more persons sometimes bathed with him.”⁴⁴

After all, to contradict the example provided by *Mauritius von Craün*, we hear more often than not about baths in the various pre-courtly goliardic verse narratives and in courtly romances in Middle High German and other literatures, and this continues well into the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.⁴⁵ Of course, early medieval saints and hermits tended to condemn baths and washing as sinful and a detraction of their spiritual quest, but their very criticism of the bathing culture indicates how much people cared about corporeal hygiene by way of washing or bathing.⁴⁶ To address the topic of bathing and cleaning in the early modern age would require another paper, and I limit myself next to fictional examples from the period until roughly the early sixteenth century.

⁴⁴ Einhard, *The Life of Charlemagne*, trans. Samuel Epes Turner (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1880), ch. 22. See also online at: <http://legacy.fordham.edu/halsall/basis/einhard.asp> (last accessed on May 5, 2015). For the ideological relationship between swimming, the ruler's exhibited body, and politics, see Horst Bredekamp, *Der schwimmende Souverän: Karl der Große und die Bildpolitik des Körpers* (Berlin: Klaus Wagenbach Verlag, 2014); Achim Thomas Hack, *Karolingische Kaiser als Sportler: Ein Beitrag zur frühmittelalterlichen Körpersgeschichte*. Jenaer mediävistische Vorträge, 4 (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2015).

⁴⁵ See the valuable contributions to *The Nature and Function of Water, Baths, Bathing, and Hygiene from Antiquity through the Renaissance*, ed. Cynthia Kosso and Anne Scott. *Technology and Change in History*, 11 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2009); and to *Bains curatifs et bains hygiéniques en Italie de l'antiquité au Moyen Âge*, ed. Marie Guérin-Beauvois and Jean-Marie Martin. *Collection de l'École française de Rome*, 383 (Rome: École française, 2007); and Isabelle Bardies-Fronty, *Le bain et le miroir: soins du corps et cosmétiques de l'Antiquité à la Renaissance* ([Paris]: Gallimard, 2009). Most scholars working on this topic are content with very broad brush-strokes and ignore the detailed analysis; see, for instance, Alfred Hartmann, *Badereise durch fünf Jahrtausende* (Mainz: Eggebrecht-Presse, 1969). The topic of the Islamic bath would deserve particular attention; see, for instance, Heinz Grotfeld, *Das Bad im arabisch-islamischen Mittelalter: Eine kulturgeschichtliche Studie* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1970). Ann Scott, in her contribution to this volume, sketches a very useful picture of the symbolic function of water in medieval literature at large, taking us from the early Middle Ages to the seventeenth century.

⁴⁶ Elizabeth Archibald, “Bathing for Beauty in the Middle Ages,” *The Recovery of Beauty: Arts, Culture, Medicine*, ed. Corinne Saunders, Jane Macnaughton, and David Fuller (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 53–71.

The Bath in Gottfried von Straßburg's *Tristan*

In Gottfried von Straßburg's *Tristan* (ca. 1210), for instance, the protagonist is taking a bath after he has been rescued by the three Irish royal ladies who had found him, unconscious, almost completely submerged in a lake where he had tried to refresh himself subsequent to his fight against the dragon. Naturally, they take good care of him so that he can recover quickly and help them, but the narrator does not yet mention any bath. Only later, once the events have progressed, and when the Princess Isolde, out of curiosity, studies Tristan's weapons while he is taking a bath, are we informed about Tristan's hygiene. Isolde recognizes that the piece missing in the sword can be filled exactly with the shard that they had discovered stuck in her uncle Morold's head. Once Isolde has also pondered the play with syllables of both names – Tanris and Tristan – she finally realizes that the man who had killed her uncle is the same who has killed the dragon and who would thus be her savior from the court steward who wants to marry her against her own wishes. Despite this dilemma, Isolde resolutely takes the sword and enters the bath to get her revenge, not yet thinking about the political implications of having her savior in her own dwelling.⁴⁷

Tristan is sitting in the hot water and is thus completely helpless against the furious Isolde, but he can resort to his best skill, his superior ability to communicate and thus to explain to her that he had been forced to fight against Morold and hence had had no alternative but to take his opponent's life in their duel. Moreover, he soon explains his true intentions to win her hand for his own uncle, King Mark of Cornwall. All those exchanges and debates take place in the bath, which seems to be a rather spacious room since the young Isolde had already examined the weapons calmly without Tristan noticing it, and since her mother and subsequently Brangaene can enter and spend time together, debating with Tristan what to do next and how to solve their political dilemma. They then retire into a private chamber to engage in further discussions, and once they have decided to listen more to Tristan and hear what he might have to offer which could help them against the seneschal, they return to his quarters where he is sitting on his bed, by now awaiting them and ready to engage in further constructive communications (10461).

The narrator is not very specific as to the arrangement with the bath and the bedroom, but the few indications are clear enough to confirm that Tristan enjoyed considerable luxury, having several rooms for his own use. We are not informed

⁴⁷ For a very detailed discussion of this and related scenes relevant for hygiene in Gottfried's *Tristan*, see the contribution to this volume by Christopher R. Clason.

about the details of the bath, but it assumes a critically important function within the larger context. It is there where his true identity is revealed, where the drama concerning the conflict between Isolde's personal desire to avenge the death of Morold and the rational approach in handling this guest according to courtly norms takes place, and where the wooing on behalf of King Mark is announced. In this bath Tantris/Tristan finds himself completely stripped, literally, from all knightly defense mechanisms, and where he must entirely rely on his intellectual strategies to prevent young Isolde from rushing into action that could cost his life.

Even though the narrator emphasizes that ultimately she could not have killed Tristan anyway because of her femininity and purity of her heart (10235–55), each time we find Tristan immersed in water – as before, after the battle against the dragon – he needs the women's help and is also required to resort to his most sophisticated rhetorical skills appealing to the hostile company not to hurt him.⁴⁸

Subsequently we never hear of a bath again, so we might argue that this scene with Tristan in the tub, Isolde with the sword in her hand, and her mother trying to bring her to reason and to accept the political conditions they are under, truly constitutes a remarkable fulcrum in the entire narrative development. To be sure, the author refers to the bathroom only fleetingly and treats its presence simply as a matter of fact that does not deserve any further consideration because it was to be expected that castles, especially royal ones, would have such luxury. Nevertheless, we observe the master strategist Tristan at his weakest moment, entirely exposed to female power, sitting in the bathtub entirely naked. His false identity as Tantris is symbolically washed away and the true Tristan emerges, enjoying the hot water and basically also ready to receive Isolde's love.⁴⁹

48 Albrecht Classen, *Verzweiflung und Hoffnung. Die Suche nach der kommunikativen Gemeinschaft in der deutschen Literatur des Mittelalters*. Beihefte zur Mediaevistik, 1 (Frankfurt a. M., Berlin, et al.: Peter Lang, 2002), 279–358. For a broad introduction to *Tristan*, see Christoph Huber, *Gottfried von Straßburg: Tristan*. 3rd, newly rev. and expanded ed. Klassiker-Lektüren, 3 (2000; Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 2013); Tomas Tomasek, *Gottfried von Straßburg* (Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam jun., 2007). The research on Gottfried is, of course, legion, but the important role of the bath in the development of the relationship between Tristan and Isolde has not yet been noticed, as far as I can tell. See, for instance, the close reading by Hugo Bekker, *Gottfried von Strassburg's Tristan: Journey Through the Realm of Eros*. Studies in German Literature, Linguistics, and Culture (Columbia, SC: Camden House, 1987), 146–56.

49 See also the contribution to this volume by Christopher R. Clason, discussing the variety of liquids functionalized by the poet for his narrative purposes.

The Bath in the *Spielmannsepos, Herzog Ernst*

Let us to look slightly backwards and consider a unique scene in the pre-courtly or goliardic romance, *Herzog Ernst* (ms. A ca. 1170; ms. B. ca. 1220/1230) where the discovery of a fully developed and exquisitely arranged bath matters greatly to the protagonist. Duke Ernst had to escape from Germany because he can no longer withstand the military persecutions by his step-father, the Emperor Otte who believes false rumors that Ernst had tried to overthrow his throne. After having reached Constantinople, where the young man is well received, he embarks once again with a new and very large fleet, but a mighty storm disassembles all ships, and only the one with Ernst and his men seems to have survived. After a long time during which they attempt to figure out where they are, they finally reach the land of the crane people, the Grippians, hybrid creatures who are aggressive and hostile to the newcomers. At first, however, the city is completely empty, open to Ernst and his advisor Wetzel, so they roam through the streets and admire the splendid buildings.

Upon a second stroll they come across a fabulous public bath with running hot and cold water. The architectural and mechanic set-up amazes the two men to no end, and they quickly indulge in the comfort of this bath, although they are really on enemy territory and do not know about the real danger they are in. Soon enough, the entire population returns, bringing with them, as a captive, the daughter of an Indian royal couple who they had killed in war. They want to force her to marry their king, which Ernst and Wetzel observe with astonishment. Unfortunately, both are espied soon, and they throw themselves on their opponents, stabbing the king to death and then killing scores of the crane people. They barely get out of the city and can escape from that country only with greatest difficulties. From then on we no longer hear of any bath.⁵⁰ The entire city proves

⁵⁰ *Herzog Ernst: Ein mittelalterliches Abenteuerbuch*, ed., trans., and with a commentary and epilogue by Bernhard Sowinski (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1970); Albrecht Classen, “Multiculturalism in the German Middle Ages? The Rediscovery of a Modern Concept in the Past: The Case of *Herzog Ernst*,” *Multiculturalism and Representation: Selected Essays*, eds. John Rieder, Larry E. Smith. Literary Studies East and West, 10 (Honolulu: College of Languages, Linguistics and Literatures, University of Hawaii, 1996), 198–219; id., “The Crusader as Lover and Tourist: Utopian Elements in Late Medieval German Literature: From *Herzog Ernst* to *Reinfried von Braunschweig* and *Fortunatus*,” *Current Topics in Medieval German Literature: Texts and Analyses (Kalamazoo Papers 2000–2006)*, ed. Sibylle Jefferis. Göppinger Arbeiten zur Germanistik, 748 (Göppingen: Kümmerle, 2008), 83–102. See also Alexandra Stein, “Die Wundervölker des *Herzog Ernst* (B): Zum Problem körpergebundener Authentizität im Medium der Schrift,” *Fremdes wahrnehmen – fremdes Wahrnehmen: Studien zur Geschichte der Wahrnehmung und zur Begegnung von Kulturen in*

to be an architectural dream come true, whether we consider the way in which the houses and palaces are built, or whether we turn to the interior spaces, all created with the most valuable objects and with the greatest care and craftsmanship. The true highlight, however, proves to be the bathhouse situated in an inner courtyard, where a most pleasant pond invites the guests to rest. The narrator offers the most elaborate description of the actual bathtubs that are fed with warm and cold water at the same time. The used water is channeled away through an iron pipe, which opens up to the streets of the entire city, which thus can be cleaned at any moment. This description concludes with these virtually breathless words: "ich wæne burc deheine / ûfe erden ie sô rîch gestê: / ir strâzen glitzen sô der snê" (2696–98; I believe that there is no other city on earth so richly built: its streets gleamed like the snow).

We might wonder whether *Herzog Ernst* here evokes an image of paradise, or whether the scene only presents an ideal image of how an ideal city and a perfect bath arrangement were supposed to be. Ernst does not reveal more than an understandable amazement and delight, but he is not truly shocked and only responds with a natural desire to take a bath after the many months having been adrift on the wild sea. He does not worry about the inhabitants arriving and catching them by surprise since they would be able to notice their appearance in time.

Moreover, he feels equipped well enough to defend himself in case of danger, so he and Wetzel take off their clothes and enjoy this extraordinarily luxurious bath. But instead of focusing on this experience at length, the narrator informs us only that they let warm and cold water flow into the tub, which allows them to enjoy their bath (2740–46). Immediately thereafter they dress again and roam through the palace, where they find highly pleasant beds, where they rest for a while, although they thus endanger themselves and their people on the ship because they are soon enough surprised by the Grippians' arrival who immediately prepare the wedding ceremony. Once the two men have been discovered, the subsequent scenes transform the seemingly idyllic city into a horrifying battle ground, and all the previous delights about the beauty, splendor, and cleanliness give way to a desperate struggle by Ernst, Wetzel, and then also his men who arrive from the ship to fend off their enemies and to rescue their lives.

Mittelalter und früher Neuzeit, ed. Wolfgang Harms and C. Stephen Jaeger, together with eadem (Stuttgart and Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1997), 21–48; Albrecht Classen, "The Encounter with the Foreign in Medieval and Early Modern German Literature: Fictionality as a Springboard for Non-Xenophobic Approaches in the Middle Ages: *Herzog Ernst*, Wolfram von Eschenbach, Konrad von Würzburg, *Die Heidin*, and *Fortunatus*," *East Meets West in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times: Transcultural Experiences in the Premodern World*, ed. Albrecht Classen. Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture, 14 (Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2013), 457–87.

However, the next stages on their long journey, which takes them to ever new challenges, to which many of them succumb, never grant them any rest, so all interest in bathing, bath houses, and other interior spaces for the private life recede and gives way to an intense engagement with the world of monsters.⁵¹ In the country of the Arimaspi (4505) they are welcomed with open arms, receive clothing and food, and quickly learn the new language, which thus makes them to most valued members of the knightly class under the monstrous king. However, the narrator does not mention any baths and seems to have forgotten his previous obsession with the fabulous bath house in Grippia.

The Bath in the World of the Grail Family: Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parzival*

We can next turn to the famous grail romance by Wolfram von Eschenbach, his *Parzival* (ca. 1205), in order to find another reference to bathing. While the early part of the narrative does not inform us about any aspects regarding personal hygiene, and this even during the time of Parzival's birth, we learn about the common experience of a knight who has arrived at a castle after a long day on horseback.

Taking a bath might be unusual for young Parzival, but the narrator clearly emphasizes the great importance of getting the body cleaned. Hygiene, however, is mentioned only once after the young man has left his mother's sylvan space in Soltâne and once he has reached the court of the knight Gurnemanz, a man of the best manners and highly qualified to provide Parzival with the basic teachings about proper behavior and manners at court. This also involves taking a bath, to be massaged by maids who thus give his bruised body some relief, but it also triggers the young man's embarrassment about his nakedness. The maids have to leave the room before he would step out of the bathtub and dress himself in a bath-robe, but the scene gives the narrator occasion to add one of his many erotic jokes: "I fancy they would have liked to see if he had sustained any harm down

⁵¹ Albrecht Classen, "The Epistemological Function of Monsters in the Middle Ages: From *The Voyage of Saint Brendan to Herzog Ernst*, Marie de France, Marco Polo and John Mandeville. What Would We Be Without Monsters in Past and Present?" *Lo Sguardo: Rivista di filologia* 9.2 (2012): 13–34. See also the contributions to *The Ashgate Research Companion to Monsters and the Monstrous*, ed. Asa Simon Mittman with Peter J. Dendle. *Ashgate Research Companion* (Farnham, Surrey, and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013), although there medieval literary examples figure only on the margin.

below, for women are such sympathetic creatures, they are always moved to pity by a friend's sufferings."⁵² Parzival is ashamed, but he is also very young and not accustomed to being surrounded by women, which allows the narrator to make fun of him, without ridiculing him in a biting fashion, since, as this passage, amongst many others in medieval literature, clearly signals that any attempts by sociologists (Norbert Elias) and others to project the Middle Ages as primitive, uncultured, or free of shame have to be dismissed by now.⁵³

Even though Wolfram does not elaborate much on the bath culture here, the little he tells us suffices already to confirm how much bodily hygiene was of supreme importance, especially at the aristocratic courts. We cannot draw any conclusions as to the sanitation among the lower social classes from this romance, but it remains very clear that taking a bath after a long day's ride on horseback was rather common and expected. A good host simply offered a bath, and Gurnemanz has even enough resources to supply his guest with maids serving him in that process. Otherwise, we hear a number of times about the private chambers in various castles where Parzival, later also Gawain, stay for a night, though then there are only very sparing references to baths and bodily cleaning.

When Parzival arrives at the Grail castle, for instance (Munsalvæsche), he is politely welcomed since the fisherman, that is, King Anfortas, had sent him personally. The squires and servants help him off his horse, they bring him to his private room ("gemach"), take off his armor, and are available for anything he might need. Parzival requests water and washes his face and hands (book V, ch. 228, 1–3; trans. 122). Later, during the festive dinner, they all first wash their hands in water and receive a silk towel to dry themselves (book V, ch. 257, 7–12; trans. 126). After the dinner, which in itself carries tremendous symbolic significance as the site of the central courtly performance, Parzival is accompanied to his bed, undressed, and then allowed to slip under the bed cover. He receives

⁵² Wolfram von Eschenbach, *Parzival*. Studienausgabe. Mittelhochdeutscher Text nach der sechsten Ausgabe von Karl Lachmann, Übersetzung von Peter Knecht. Einführung zum Text von Bernd Schirok (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1998), book III, chapter 166, 27–30; the English I have taken from the translation by A. T. Hatto (London: Penguin, 1980), 94.

⁵³ Albrecht Classen, "Naked Men in Medieval German Literature and Art: Anthropological, Cultural-Historical, and Mental-Historical Investigations," *Sexuality in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times: New Approaches to a Fundamental Cultural-Historical and Literary-Anthropological Theme*, ed. Albrecht Classen. Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture, 3 (Berlin and New York: de Gruyter, 2008), 143–69; see also the contributions to *Scham und Schamlosigkeit: Grenzverletzungen in Literatur und Kultur der Vormoderne*, ed. Katja Gvozdeva and Hans Rudolf Velten. Trends in Medieval Philology, 21 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2011).

more wine and fruit and is served like a prince, but the narrator neglects entirely to inform us in any way about the protagonist's private hygiene.

Does this mean that Wolfram signaled how little people cared about baths and washing at his time, even at the aristocratic courts? No one is ever brushing his or her teeth; we learn nothing about washing cloths; and the one and only scene with a bath might rather confirm the worst ideas about the 'dirty' Middle Ages. But this would do great injustice to Wolfram, his audience, and the intention that he pursued with his text. After all, to learn more about hygiene and bathing culture in the pre-modern world requires casting a wide net, including art-historical documents, chronicles, travelogues, etc. Nevertheless, even Wolfram confirms through these brief remarks how important water was for the personal well-being of his protagonists.

The Elaborate Bath House in Der Pleier's *Melerantz von Frankreich*

A much more elaborate image of bathing is provided in the thirteenth-century Arthurian romance *Melerantz von Frankreich* by Der Pleier, a text that has certainly not been regarded with great respect and continues to rank fairly lowly in German medieval scholarship.⁵⁴ This romance has survived only in one late medieval manuscript, which appears to tell us that already the contemporary

⁵⁴ "Melerantz von Frankreich" – *Der Meleranz des Pleier: Nach der Karlsruher Handschrift. Edition – Untersuchungen – Stellenkommentar*, ed. Markus Steffen. Texte des späten Mittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit, 48 (Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 2011); for an English translation, see *The Pleier's Arthurian Romances: Garel of the Blooming Valley, Tandareis and Flordibel, Meleranz*, trans. and with an intro. by J. W. Thomas. Garland Library of Medieval Literature, Series B 91 (New York and London: Garland, 1992); but I have used my own translation here. Walter Haug, "Paradigmatische Poesie. Der spätere deutsche Artusroman auf dem Weg zu einer nachklassischen Ästhetik," *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte* 54 (1980): 204–31; Manfred Kern, *Die Artusromane des Pleier: Untersuchungen über den Zusammenhang von Dichtung und literarischer Situation*. Philologische Studien und Quellen, 100 (Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 1981); see also Moritz Wedell, "Gaben aus der Wildnis: ihre semiotische Ambiguität und die Umdeutung des arthurischen Erzählers zum Minne- und Aventiurerroman im "Melerantz" von dem Pleier," *Liebesgaben: kommunikative, performative und poetologische Dimensionen in der Literatur des Mittelalters und der Frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Margreth Egidi. Philologische Studien und Quellen, 240 (Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 2012), 255–79.

audiences were not particularly impressed by it.⁵⁵ Nevertheless, here we come across an intricate description of a bath that hardly finds a parallel in other medieval narratives. Leaving aside most of the central aspects relevant for the protagonist's life and actions, which characterize him as a true, though rather simplistic, Arthurian character who never faces any really serious challenge and triumphs over all of his opponents without being critically tested in any of the many situations. Melerantz faces a number of problems, and his quest for love and glory is certainly not an easy one, but he is predetermined to achieve all of his goals and to gain profound fame and happiness at the conclusion of this perhaps 'trivial' romance.

Early on, having left his parents secretly in order to search for King Arthur and join his court, Melerantz roams the wild forest where he suddenly comes across an open space which is occupied by a truly elaborate bath.⁵⁶ After having spent the night lost in the forest, the young man reaches a beautiful meadow in the early morning, accompanied by the singing of the birds. A linden tree – a most symbolic tree representing love in medieval German and other literature – stands in the middle of the open space (439–41). Below that tree there are two wells, the water of which is led through silver pipes to a tub. They are supported by marble stones, sparkling in their white color, as if they were mirrors (453–57). That tub was set up there for a lady, who later will turn out to be Melerantz's future wife. The narrator, however, at first describes in detail how this bathtub is constructed and what materials it is made of. Similar to the bath in *Herzog Ernst*, one pipe is filled with hot, the other with cold water (466), but we are not informed about the source of heating. The tub itself is made out of exotic, very rare, hence highly valuable wood: "Daß holtz was lingalawe, / verr braucht über se / von dem Lannd ze Kouesesas" (469–71; This was wood from the aloe tree [*lignum aloe*], brought from across the sea imported from the Land of Koueses [Caucasus]), which emphasizes the Oriental origin of the entire bath ensemble.⁵⁷ Golden decorations embellish the tub.

Melerantz approaches the tree and the well, marveling at this fantastic construction (476–78). Subsequently he rides closer, when four maids run away as if

⁵⁵ Karlsruhe, Landesbibliothek, Cod. Donaueschingen 87; see <http://www.handschriftencensus.de/werke/1335> (last accessed on April 14, 2015).

⁵⁶ I have extensively discussed the role of the forest in *Melerantz* in my book *The Forest in Medieval German Literature: Ecocritical Readings from a Historical Perspective*. Ecocritical Theory and Practice (Lanham, MD, Boulder, CO, et al.: Lexington Books, 2015).

⁵⁷ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agarwood> (last accessed on April 14, 2015); Wolfram von Eschenbach mentions the same wood in his *Parzival*, ch. 481, 17, and ch. 790, 7. In his *Willehalm* this term refers to 'forest' in general (69, 12; 375, 24).

being afraid of him – certainly a deliberate strategy on their part to grant their lady a chance to talk with him privately. He ties the horse to a branch, leaves his bow and arrow behind, and gets closer, filled with amazement about the astonishing architectural design. He still carries his sword, but he really does not worry about danger (505) and rather believes that he will experience an adventure there underneath the linden tree.

Indeed, Melerantz encounters the princess Tytomei who is taking a bath in the tub, which is closed off to the outside, but she still can easily communicate with the visitor, in whom she recognizes the man whom her necromantically skilled magistra had announced as her future husband. In order to test the stranger, she had sent away her maids, leaving her alone, which presents her with the desired opportunity to converse with him. In the meantime, Melerantz has found an elaborate bed next to the bath structure (569–94) which is covered with ekphrastic elements.⁵⁸

The narrator delights in giving us a most elaborate description of the entire design of the pipe system, leading the water to the linden tree, where the water runs into the tub. Next to the tub is placed a blue column (596) into which redundant water flows which is not needed for the bath. Then the water exits from the column and enters the meadow again to feed the linden tree and the flowers. Subsequently the narrator has Melerantz's attention turn to the bed next to the tub, which proves to be superbly set-up, covered by the most valuable blankets. We also hear of an elegant bath robe which would hardly find a match anywhere, and which thus complements the entire architectural ensemble, transforming it into an extremely wealthy and luxurious setting worthy of a princess.⁵⁹

Once Melerantz has studied the entire arrangement, he turns to the bath itself, recognizing immediately that it must have been prepared for a woman (729). Although he would have liked to examine the bath also from the inside, he is only too aware that the person inside would be deeply ashamed if he were to espy her naked (734–35). He himself would lose all honor if he were to transgress the basic rules of decency and break into her private space (737–39). Realizing this dilemma, he then decides to depart before creating too much of an embarrassment for both, but this then would ruin Tytomei's own plans, wherefore she opens the curtain and yells at him, pretending to be angry with him. The exchange between

58 For a cultural history of the bed, see Karin Lerchner, *Lectulus floridus: Zur Bedeutung des Bettes in Literatur und Handschriftenillustration des Mittelalters*. Pictura et poesis, 6 (Cologne, Weimar, and Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 1993). She does not, however, refer to Der Pleier's *Melerantz*.

59 Markus Steffen, ed., *Melerantz*, 341–49, et passim, provides very useful word explanations and references to various literary sources.

them quickly proves to her that he commands a high level of education and that she can trust him to respect her privacy and honor. This is most vividly expressed in his feeling of deep shame: “Vor scham ward der jung man / vil rot unnd sprach ...” (776–77; The young man turned deeply red out of shame and said ...).

Tytomeit continues with her play for some more time, displaying anger over his fault that the chamber maids had fled because of his arrival, and then requests that he substitute for them. Of course, she herself had sent the maids away in order to have this ‘intimate’ situation with her future lover. Having only him available as her ‘servant,’ she orders him to bring her bath robe, bath blouse, and her shoes (810–12), then to give her some privacy until she can dress (819–21), and finally to stand guard at her bed to chase away flies or mosquitoes during her sleep (830–32). Melerantz obeys her in every way, and then falls deeply in love with her, which is, basically, the beginning of this long Arthurian romance (12841 vv.).

Once this fascinating scene has passed, we are told much about the standard aspects of courtly life, of knighthood, and of chivalry, but there are no further comments about private hygiene, bath culture, and personal cleaning, especially because the narrator is just too busy with many military and political events in Melerantz’s life, which are ultimately crowned by his marriage with Tytomei. There is obviously no more need to situate any of the major figures in the private setting of a bath, but we can be certain that the early episode with Tytomei using the elaborate bath house to arrange this first meeting with her future husband must have met with the expectations by the contemporary audience.

Der Pleier apparently projected, without any doubt, a considerably more sophisticated bath setting than would have existed in reality, but we can draw several significant conclusions. Just as in the previous cases, here we come across a literary reflection on an idealized bath house ensemble which would have been the dream of any medieval aristocrat. It is situated, however, not in the castle, but in open nature, underneath a linden tree, which clearly evokes the tradition of courtly love. Even though the architectural design of this bath house might have been an exaggeration, just as the account of the internal equipment, the literary framework signals specifically what belonged to the norms of noble residences.

But while Duke Ernst, Tristan, and Parzival are the ones to enjoy a bath and hence to take good care of their bodies after a long fight or a day’s ride on horseback, Der Pleier has the female protagonist sit in the bathtub, which forces the visitor to observe her at a distance and to respect her shame level. Even though *Melerantz* certainly does not qualify as a supreme example of an Arthurian romance, since it is characterized by so many stock features, standard figures, and repetitive knightly actions, the entire episode with the bath house proves to be highly significant in cultural-historical terms. Cleanliness and personal

hygiene obvious mattered greatly for Tytomei, and her visitor regards all the arrangements with the hot and cold water running separately into the tub, from where surplus water is fed away to nature, with great admiration and respect.

The Uncanny Figure of Melusine in Her Bath on Saturdays: Water and Taboo

This unique narrative situation represents a good segue to one of the most famous examples of a female character taking a bath in late medieval literature, Melusine. Even though we know of references to this mythical figure, Melusine, from as early as the late twelfth century (Walter Map, Gervasius of Tilbury), the first fully-fledged account was produced by Jean d'Arras in 1393 on behalf of his patron Jean, Duke of Berry. This prose version was soon followed by one in octosyllabic verse by a certain Couldrette in ca. 1400. In 1456, the Bernese citizen Thüring von Ringoltingen, commissioned by the Margrave Rudolf of Hochberg, Count of Neufchatel, translated the latter into early modern German. This is the one I will use here as the basis for my subsequent discussion of the bath and hygiene.⁶⁰ In order to focus on the themes of bathing and hygiene, I will leave aside most of the framing narrative elements concerning how the male protagonist Reymund encounters his future wife, how they establish a dynasty by themselves, and how their sons fare far and wide in the world. We also do not need to explore the meaning of the mysterious fairy world from where Melusine and her two sisters have originated, and where they have to return at the end because their male

⁶⁰ Jean d'Arras, *Melusine; or, the Noble History of Lusignan*, trans. and with an intro. by Donald Maddox and Sara Sturm-Maddox (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2012); Albrecht Classen, *The German Volksbuch: A Critical History of a Late-Medieval Genre*. Studies in German Language and Literature, 15 (Lewiston, NY, Queenston, and Lampeter: Edwin Mellen Press, 1995, reissued 1999); see now the contributions to *550 Jahre deutsche Melusine – Couldrette und Thüring von Ringoltingen: Beiträge der wissenschaftlichen Tagung der Universitäten Bern und Lausanne vom August 2006*, ed. André Schnyder and Jean-Claude Mühlenthaler. Tausch, 16 (Bern, Berlin, et al.: Peter Lang, 2008); *Eulenspiegel trifft Melusine: Der frühneuhochdeutsche Prosaroman im Licht neuer Forschungen und Methoden. Akten der Lausanner Tagung vom 2. bis 4. Oktober 2008*, ed. Catherine Drittenbass and André Schnyder, together with Alexander Schwarz. Chloe, 42 (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2010); *Zeichensprachen des literarischen Buches in der frühen Neuzeit: Die 'Melusine' des Thüring von Ringoltingen*, ed. Ursula Rautenberg, Hans-Jörg Künast, Mechthild Habermann, and Heidrun Stein-Kecks (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2013). Here I quote Thüring's text from *Romane des 15. und 16. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Jan-Dirk Müller. Bibliothek der Frühen Neuzeit, 1 (Frankfurt a. M.: Deutscher Klassiker-Verlag, 1990).

human partners fail in their commitment not to transgress taboos. The only point that we need to discuss here is the unique condition which Melusine has set for her future husband, never to investigate her whereabouts on Saturdays.

As in all other *Melusine* versions, Thüring predicated his account on the difficult relationship between husband and wife. No marriage functions well if one of the partners disappears regularly without any good explanation. Marie de France, for instance, had already illustrated this with the case of Bisclavret, who is absent three days a week during which he transforms, as he eventually admits to his wife, into a werewolf. This confession shocks her so deeply that she is immediately intent on eliminating her husband from her life, and she succeeds in this plan at least for some time, though at the end she herself suffers a severe punishment for her wrongdoing.⁶¹

Melusine's and Reymund's marriage lasts, however, a long time, resulting in many children and the prosperity of the entire family. Nevertheless, ultimately, his brother raises doubts in Reymund's mind about her fidelity, so although he had sworn an oath not to spy on her during her personal 'down' time on Saturdays, he follows her one day, carves a hole into the door to her bath, and discovers, to his horror, that she has turned into a snake person, with a tail from her navel down, thus proving to be the representative of the absolute other in human existence.⁶² Even though Reymund is deeply shaken by this realization, he is much more worried about his own guilt in having broken the taboo, so he quickly retires to his bedroom and falls seriously ill. In the evening, Melusine returns, pretending not to know what he had done, and can thus help him to recover. Their marriage thus continues for a while, but then a catastrophe occurs. One of their sons, Geffroy, learns that his younger brother Freymund has joined a monastery, which fills him with so much anger that he burns down the entire complex, together with the abbot and all the monks. Once Reymund learns this

⁶¹ Marie de France, *The Lays of Marie de France*. Trans., with Intro. and Commentary, by Edward J. Gallagher (Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett Publishing, 2010); see also *The Lais of Marie de France*, trans. with an intro. by Glyn S. Burgess and Keith Busby (1986; London: Penguin, 2003). See now the contributions to *A Companion to Marie de France*, ed. Logan E. Whalen. Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition, 27 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2011); and Sharon Kinoshita and Peggy McCracken, *Marie de France: A Critical Companion*. Gallica, 24 (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2012), 68–72.

⁶² Albrecht Classen, "Love and Fear of the Foreign: Thüring von Ringoltingen's *Melusine* (1456). A Xenological Analysis," *Foreign Encounters: Case Studies in German Literature*, ed. Mara Wade & Glenn Ehrstine. *Daphnis* 33.1–2 (2004): 97–122; id., "The Monster Outside and Within: Medieval Literary Reflections on Ethical Epistemology. From *Beowulf* to *Marie de France*, the *Nibelungenlied*, and Thüring von Ringoltingen's *Melusine*," *Neohelicon* 40.2 (2013): 521–42.

terrible news, he gets so incensed that he publicly curses Melusine, making her hybrid nature responsible for this devastating outcome, and forces her, although it is really against his own wish, to depart from him and from mankind altogether. She has to wait until the Day of Judgment before she will be allowed to be freed from her snake nature (116–17).

Reymund's essential fault consisted not only of having broken his promise and having found out her true being in the bath, but, much worse, of having promulgated publicly who she is, thus handing her over, as she says, to the devil's control. She would have forgiven him his transgression and the situation would have been easy to handle, if he had kept his new knowledge about her a secret. However, having cursed her in front of all those witnesses condemned her permanently and made it impossible for her to stay with mankind (117). As she underscores explicitly: "so du mir gehalten vnd dein gelüb geleistet hettest aufgerecht vnd redlichen So wer ich natürlich bey dir gewesen vnd beliben. vnd als ein ander natürlich weib gestorben. vnd der erden beuolhen worden / vnd were mein sele von meinem leib gewißlich zuo der ewigen freüd kommen" (117; if you had kept your oath honestly as sworn to me I would have stayed with you and would have died like any other normal woman, and I would have been buried and my soul would have surely traveled from my body to the eternal joys).

The narrative takes its course from here, with Reymund indeed experiencing a rapid decline after his wife's departure. However, the family dynasty continues to grow, although some of the sons commit, just as their father, the transgression of taboos against their own aunts. Central for our purpose proves to be the fact that Melusine spends every Saturday in her bath. Throughout time various illustrators have depicted her either floating or standing in the water, the torso naked, showing her female body, while the lower part consists of a tail.

On the one hand, we regularly learn of Melusine being associated with water or water-related objects, especially a cistern in the forest, where she encounters Reymund and where she establishes her dynasty.⁶³ On the other, she is intimately identified with water when she passes the Saturdays in her bath. The illustrators in the various manuscripts, incunabula, and early prints placed great emphasis on the bath house and provided numerous details, allowing us as spectators fully to understand the secrets and the circumstances of Melusine taking that long and meaningful bath. In the 1474 edition by Johann Bämler (Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Inc. c.a.295) the woodcut provides only a small picture, barely

⁶³ Martina Oehri, *Dinge, die die Welt bewegen: Zur Kohärenz im frühneuzeitlichen Prosaroman*. Deutsche Literatur von den Anfängen bis 1700, 50 (Bern, Berlin, et al.: Peter Lang, 2015), 80–86.

informing us what is going on.⁶⁴ In the edition by Bernhard Richel published 1473/74, today held in the Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek Darmstadt (Inc IV 94),⁶⁵ by contrast, we face a whole-page illustration that is composed of several actions at once that happen, however, in a sequence.

On the right hand the building of the bath house is opened up completely, granting us a full view of Melusine in the water. She wears her elegant horned head gear, but her upper body is naked. She gazes out to Reymund, apparently completely cognizant of his transgression. In his right hand he holds his sword, with which he had cut the hole in the door, already placed back into the sheath, but he is already turning to the left where we notice his brother riding away in great haste. We know from the subsequent scene that Reymund will chase him away, threatening him with death, out of his deep anger over having instigated him to transgress his oath. Later, Geffroy will attempt to kill his uncle to avenge the loss of his mother Melusine, but the count escapes and yet then falls to his death (147–48).

In the illustration, however, we recognize, above all, that this bath house represents a stately building of great sophistication, topped by two towers. The bath itself is equipped with a window, while Melusine appears to have plenty of water available to float freely. This situation is presented quite differently in the manuscript from 1468, today held in the Nuremberg Germanisches Nationalmuseum (GNM Hs. 4028), since here the focus rests entirely on Reymund gazing into the bathroom, where he observes his wife sitting in a huge tub.⁶⁶ There is not much space for this tub, so it seems; moreover, even this big container does not appear to be enough for her long curly tail, green in color. Melusine leans back and holds up both hands, with her head slightly slanted to the side, with an expression of melancholy and grief, obviously because she can anticipate the sad destiny for her. We do not notice the water, which is probably too low for us as viewers, but the entire ensemble underscores dramatically how important this bath house is for Melusine.

Virtually all subsequent illustrators paid similar attention to the bath because it is there where Melusine transforms from an ordinary woman to the

⁶⁴ *Romane des 15. und 16. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Jan-Dirk Müller. Bibliothek der Frühen Neuzeit, 1 (Frankfurt a. M.: Deutscher Klassiker-Verlag, 1990), 98.

⁶⁵ *Die schöne Melusine: Ein Feenroman des 15. Jahrhunderts in der deutschen Übertragung des Thüring von Ringoltingen. Die Bilder im Erstdruck Basel 1473/74 nach dem Exemplar der Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek Darmstadt*, ed. Heidrun Stein-Kecks, together with Simone Hespers and Benedicta Feraudi-Denier (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2012), 117 (fol. 49r).

⁶⁶ *Die schöne Melusine* (see note 61), 32.

hybrid being. For our purposes, however, we can conclude that all authors who composed a version of this *Stoff*, and all illustrators contributing their art works, simply assumed that a bath was an integral component of any castle. Moreover, as the narrative framework and the woodcuts consistently demonstrate, Melusine can fully enjoy her time in the bathroom and in the bath house, which is always presented as most elegant and comfortable space. In light of this observation, it is possible to confirm that the previous literary descriptions of baths probably reflected common situations, at least as far as an aristocratic audience was concerned. Taking a bath was, hence, a standard activity and required extensive efforts to create the necessary architectural space and provide the expected equipment.

But we also need to keep in mind that Melusine is the only person presented as taking a bath because her association with water is critical in her case. This does not mean that her husband, her sons, or any other person at court would not take a bath or would neglect his/her hygiene and well-being. The literary framework simply does not focus much on this private activity; only in the case of Melusine does taking a bath matter centrally. Importantly, we can easily recognize here direct parallels between the bathhouse and bath in Thüring's prose novel and contemporary art works, such as the *Hausbuch* in the Castle Wolfegg (see above) and the medieval health handbook, *Tacuinum sanitatis*, which was particularly popular in the late Middle Ages.⁶⁷ Even though the latter does not depict a bathroom or bath house per se, it reflects on many different aspects of human life all contributing to or detracting from health, including warm water.⁶⁸

The Newly-Wed Couple Taking a Bath: Bathing in Oswald von Wolkenstein's Poetry

One more example from late medieval German literature will confirm the overall argument regarding the great interest in personal hygiene and the necessity to have baths, already in the pre-modern world. In the poetry by the South-Tyrolean poet Oswald von Wolkenstein (1376/77–1445) we hear a number of times about him

⁶⁷ Ibn Butlan, *Tacuinum sanitatis: The Medieval Health Handbook*, trans. and adapted by Oscar Ratti and Adele Westbrook from the original Italian edition by Luisa Cogliati Arano (1973; New York: Braziller, 1976).

⁶⁸ Fol. 89 of the Vienna manuscript shows a scene in a kitchen where a woman warms up her naked feet in warm water (plate II).

and his newly-wed wife Margarete of Schwangau taking a bath situated openly in nature.⁶⁹ In the song "Wol auff, wol an" (Kl. 75), the fictional character Oswald (probably blurred profoundly with the autobiographical character) we hear about the young couple Ösli and Gredli (Oswald and Margaret) getting together in the meadow where a bathtub has been set up for their enjoyment. But it is not simply their desire to get clean, but instead here they explore each other's bodies and so also enjoy sexual pleasures. All nature joins in their happiness and seems to support their intimate bliss. We are not told much about the specific set-up, whether there is a wooden structure as in Der Pleier's *Melerantz*, or whether the bath is located in a building, as in the case of Thüring von Ringoltingen's *Melusine*. The poet only voices the command to his servants: "Pring den buttern, / lass uns kuttren" (32–33; bring the tub, let us flirt). In other words, this is a mobile bath, but a bathtub for sure. Bodily cleaning and sexual experiences closely go hand in hand, as he says to her: "wascha, meidli, / mir das schaidli!" (34–35; Wash me, young woman, / my head), whereupon she responds: "reib mich, knäblin, / umb das näblin" (36–37; Rub me, young man, / at my belly button!). And she expresses even more explicitly what she will do for him: "hilfst du mir, leicht vach ich dir das rëtzl" (38–39; If you help me, / I might grab the little rat [= i.e., penis]).

Even though Oswald hardly goes into any details, his poem still matters considerably in our investigations. The brief remarks, embedded in a highly eroticized marriage song, confirm that bathing, washing, and the pleasure of warm water were more common in medieval literature than we might have assumed. We might be justified in arguing, even *ex negativo*, considering that most poets of Arthurian or Grail romances mention baths and hence personal hygiene only rarely, and then only in passing, that the bath was a common institution. The reasons for this contradictory conclusion are not hard to detect. The relatively few examples might be, at first sight, exceptions, and the case of *Mauritius von Craün* might support the notion of the 'dirty' Middle Ages after all. However, the drastic failure with which Mauritius's wooing ends stands in strong contrast to the situation in *Tristan*, *Herzog Ernst*, *Parzival*, and *Melusine* – the last case falling into

⁶⁹ *Die Lieder Oswalds von Wolkenstein*, ed. Karl Kurt Klein. 3rd. rev. and expanded ed. Hans Moser, Norbert Richard Wolf, and Notburga Wolf. Altdeutsche Textbibliothek, 55 (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1987); even though the fourth edition, prepared by Burghart Wachinger (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2015), has recently appeared, at an astronomical price, the differences are not dramatic. For the English translation, see Albrecht Classen, *The Poems of Oswald von Wolkenstein: An English Translation of the Complete Works (1376/77–1445)*. The New Middle Ages (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008); for a solid overview of the relevant research, see *Oswald von Wolkenstein: Leben – Werk – Rezeption*, ed. Ulrich Müller and Margarete Springeth (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2011).

another category once again, since there water, the bathtub, and the closed door to the bathroom reflect the mysterious otherworld where she originates from.

Were the Middle Ages Really So Dirty Then?

Combining what we know about the visual representation of baths, especially from the late Middle Ages, with the literary discourse on bathing and hygiene, we have available, in fact, a remarkable critical mass confirming, after all, how much at least the members of the aristocracy cared for and embraced bathing as a standard for their own lives. This does not tell us anything about the world of the peasants,⁷⁰ and the situation in the cities also would have to be examined separately – again, considering the example provided by Heinrich Kaufringer. While courtly festivities, tournaments, games, courting and wooing, clothing, dinners, music, and many other aspects relevant for courtly life are richly discussed and presented in highly elaborate fashion, the private dimension regularly disappears behind a veil of decency. We cannot simply deduce that hence people did not wash themselves. If poets refer to baths, they do so for specific reasons since it allows them to present their protagonists in peculiar situations. Otherwise, they tend to ignore or to neglect this private space.

By contrast, didactic writers such as the didactic and highly learned poet Hugo von Trimberg (ca. 1230–after 1313) in his *Renner* and scientific authors such as Conrad of Megenberg (1309–1374) specifically addressed baths and outlined, each from his personal perspective, their practical use and effectiveness. Bathing could also be used to heal a person's mental illness. In the *Busant* (early fourteenth-century German verse narrative), bathing also matters greatly, though only at the end when the court tries to rescue a young man from insanity.

The prince of England falls in love with the princess of France, but she is already selected to marry the “künig von Marroch” (543; the King of Morocco).⁷¹

⁷⁰ One brief, rather sarcastic remark about the bathing culture among peasants, which was allegedly very limited, can be found in Heinrich Wittenwiler's *Ring: Text – Übersetzung – Kommentar*. Nach der Münchener Handschrift herausgegeben, übersetzt und erläutert von Werner Röcke unter Mitarbeit von Annika Goldenbaum (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2012), v. 1407.

⁷¹ Friedrich Heinrich von der Hagen, *Gesamtabenteuer: Hundert altdeutsche Erzählungen*, vol. 1 (1850; Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1961), no. XVI, 331–66. This is now also available online at http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=File%3ADer_Busanter_poem.pdf&page=11 (last accessed on May 19, 2015). The narrative has survived in complete form in two and in fragmentary form in two other manuscripts; see <http://www.handschriftencensus.de/werke/1709> (last accessed on May 19, 2015); Armin Schulz, “*Dem bûsanter daz hout abe beiz*: Eine

The two young people succeed in running away to elope, but while they rest in a meadow, and she is sleeping, he is studying two rings that he had taken from her finger. A buzzard suddenly steals the ring and flies away, and the young prince in vain tries to recapture the ring. However, he then does not find his way back and despairs over the loss of his beloved. The enormous rage in his mind creates so much energy that he falls into insanity, rips off his clothing, and then roams the forest, running both on his arms and legs – very similar to Hartmann von Aue's *Iwein* (ca. 1200).

The princess is taken in by a miller, for whom she works diligently, but she is later recognized by the local duchess as a worthy noble young lady in disguise and so takes her to the court. The young man, by contrast, fully turns into a wild creature and is finally captured by hunters ready to kill him. However, the duke feels sympathy for him and orders that this wild being receive good treatment for a long time until food, bath, care, and clothing finally help him to recover not only his original body, but also his mind. For six weeks he receives an intensive water and rubbing treatment until he regains his original shape and his healthy mind again (812–14). Water, hence, was clearly recognized as a healing agent already then.

Bathing and the Healthy Spa as Observed by a Humanist: Poggio Bracciolini

The Florentine humanist Poggio Bracciolini (1380–1459) witnessed, as reflected in one of his letters to Nicolaus de Niccolis (Niccolò de' Niccoli, 1364–1437), a major public bath complex in Baden, near Bad Ragaz south of Vaduz in north-eastern Switzerland, available both for men and women (Letter III, May 18,

anthropologisch-poetologische Lektüre des 'Busant', "Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Literatur (PBB) 122 (2000): 432–54; Sandra Linden, "Erzählen als Therapeutikum? Der wahnsinnige Königssohn im 'Bussard', " 'Texte zum Sprechen bringen': Philologie und Interpretation: Festschrift für Paul Sappeler, ed. Christiane Ackermann and Ulrich Barton (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 2009), 171–82; I have discussed this narrative recently in "Mental and Physical Health, Spirituality and Religion in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Age: Medieval Answers for Our Future? With Special Emphasis on Spiritual Healing Through Narratives of Mourning: Johannes of Tepl and Christine de Pizan," *Mental Health, Spirituality, and Religion in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Age*, ed. Albrecht Classen. Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture, 15 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2014), 1–154; here 15–18.

1416).⁷² Poggio, however, was not surprised about the bath house itself, but about the open-minded approach to public nudity and indirect invitation to enjoy sexuality as well. However, just as in the case of the illustrations of the famous Wenceslas Bible (see above), the institution of baths mostly served medical purposes, since bathing was commonly recommended by physicians as part of the regimen of health.⁷³ Even Poggio confirmed this more or less explicitly. Although quoted already numerous times in the past, for our purposes it will be worth to include some passages from this important account once again:

There is a large court in the middle of the villa and around it are elaborate suites for the reception of many nations. Each house has its own bath inside where only those people bathe who are lodging there; then there are both private and public baths, about thirty in all. But there are two public baths, one on either side of the court, the baths of the lower classes and common people to which come women and men and boys and unwed maids and the dregs of the surrounding population. In these a sort of open fence like one between peaceful neighbors separates the men from the women. It is comical to see decrepit old women as well as younger ones going naked into the water before the eyes of men and displaying their private parts and their buttocks to the onlookers. I have often laughed at this extraordinary sight, calling to mind the carnival, and I have privately wondered at the simplicity of these people who do not stare, suspect evil, or speak it. But the baths in private houses are very clean and are used by men and women; a sort of lattice separates them, and in these there are many low windows, through which the bathers can drink together and talk and see both ways and touch each other as is their usual custom. (26)

and:

The men wear nothing but a leather apron, and the women put on linen shirts down to their knees, so cut on either side that they leave uncovered neck, bosom, arms, and shoulders. They often have picnics by subscription in the water, with the table set floating on the water, and men are usually present at these. We were once invited to join in this practice in the house where we bathed. I paid my share but did not want to participate though asked again

⁷² Christopher Hatch MacEvitt, “Baths and Bathing,” *Dictionary of the Middle Ages: Supplement*, 1, ed. William Chester Jordan (New York, Detroit, et al.: Thomson/Gale, 2004), 49–51; *Two Renaissance Book Hunters: The Letters of Poggio Bracciolini to Nicolaus De Niccolis*, trans. from the Latin and annotated by Phyllis Walter Goodhart Gordon. *Records of Civilization, Sources and Studies*, 91 (1974; New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 26–28; Poggio Bracciolini, *Lettere a Niccolò Niccoli*, a cura di Helene Harth (Florence: Leo S. Olschki Editore, 1984), vol. 1, no. 46, 128–35. See also the contributions to this volume by David Tomíček and by Thomas G. Benedek.

⁷³ Roy Porter, *The Medical History of Waters and Spas*. *Medical History, Supplement 10* (London: Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine, 1990). For more global perspectives, see the exhibition catalogue *Intimacy!: Baden in der Kunst = [Intimacy!]: Bathing in Art*, ed. Burkhard Leismann and Martina Padberg (Ahlen: Kunstmuseum Ahlen; Cologne: Wienand, 2010).

and again, not that I was moved by any undue modesty, which is considered cowardice, or provinciality, but by my ignorance of the language. For it seemed to me ridiculous that a man from Italy, ignorant of their language, should sit in the water with a lot of women, completely speechless, while the day was wasted by everyone's drinking and nibbling. But two of my companions went to the baths and had a very good time. They were there with women, touched them, drank with them, and ate with them, even talked to them through an interpreter, all the while making a little breeze with a fan; all we needed was that picture of Jove appearing to Danae in a shower of golden rain and the rest. But the men wore linen shirts, as is their custom when they go bathing with women. (27)

Leaving aside the erotic atmosphere so vividly described by Poggio, which had, however, nothing to do with orgies or any other kind of inappropriate sexual conduct, we can clearly recognize the great emphasis which people from far and wide, including the author himself, placed on hygiene and bathing:

Lured by this extravagant gaiety and entertainment, since I bathed only twice in a day, I spent the rest of the time visiting other baths, where I often threw pennies and garlands according to the custom of the rest. For there was no time for reading or philosophy in the midst of all the bands, flutes, zithers, and songs, resounding all around me, where only to wish to be wise would have been the height of folly, especially to anyone who is not a very Menedemus the self-tormenter and who is a man who thinks nothing that is part of men's lives is foreign to him. (28)

Later travel writers, such as the highly respected and wealthy alderman from Halle a. d. S., Hans von Waltheym, confirmed at length in his account written sometime after 1475 how popular the baths in Baden were and that virtually any traveler or pilgrim who passed through that area happily spent time in that location in order to utilize the warm and healing water. Many rich and noble individuals had established their own, private bath houses and happily invited the wealthy citizen to spend time with them, particularly in those baths.⁷⁴ Waltheym also refers to other important spas elsewhere and underscores throughout his intriguing and highly informative narrative how much those who could afford it sought out those spas

⁷⁴ Ich, Hans von Waltheym: *Bericht über eine Pilgerreise im Jahr 1474 von Halle in die Provinz*, ed. Birte Krüger and Klaus Krüger. *Forschungen zur hallischen Stadtgeschichte*, 21 (Halle a. d. S.: Mitteldeutscher Verlag, 2014), 68, 224–26. For critical comments, see Arnold Esch, "Von Halle in die Provence: Der Bericht des Hans von Waltheym über seine Pilgerreise 1474," *Jahrbuch für hallische Stadtgeschichte* (2007): 11–39; id., "Anschaung und Begriff: Die Bewältigung fremder Wirklichkeit durch den Vergleich in Reiseberichten des späten Mittelalters," *Historische Zeitschrift* 253 (1991): 281–312.

to relax, to improve their health, and to enjoy company with others.⁷⁵ However, he has no comments about the erotic allure of those spas and described the entire situation quite differently than Poggio, but this is not the topic of this paper.

By contrast, the examples drawn from medieval and early modern German (and French) literature reveal less about baths than we might have expected, and yet more than is commonly assumed. Broadly speaking, medieval poets normally did not turn their attention to such private matters, but this should not blind us to the fact that baths existed at many places throughout the entire Middle Ages and far beyond (Poggio). Medieval bathing culture was probably not comparable to that from the late antiquity or our own time, but we can now safely dismiss the convenient myth of the pre-modern world being simply dirty and lacking in basic hygiene, at least as far as the aristocratic class, the clergy, and the urban citizens were concerned. The historical records often report about public, particularly health baths that were frequented by the members of the royal and other courts.

The spa of Wildbad Gastein situated in a high valley of the Hohe Tauern mountain range, the so called Pongau region ca. 80 miles south of Salzburg, was a favorite resort for Duke Sigmund of Tyrol, who went there in 1451 and 1459, followed by his wife Eleonore of Austria, who went there in July 1465 and spent four weeks in that town, taking baths every day for several hours, and then looked for personal entertainment. At the end of August 1474 she visited the famous spa of Baden in modern-day Switzerland, but this time she also pursued important political business and brought about a significant diplomatic resolution. The spa, in other words, could also be a meaningful meeting point of many high-ranking individuals, who enjoyed the bathing, but then sat down together to negotiated the case.⁷⁶

Conclusion

Whenever medieval poets turned to courtly festivities, to knights arriving at castles after a long day on horseback, or when they reflected on major events involving the public, the guests of honor and the hosts were certainly taking baths, regard-

⁷⁵ Birgit Studt, "Die Badenfahrt: Ein neues Muster der Badepraxis und Badegeselligkeit im deutschen Spätmittelalter," *Badeorte und Bäderreisen in Antike, Mittelalter und Neuzeit*, ed. Michael Matheus. Mainzer Vorträge, 5 (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2001), 33–51.

⁷⁶ Margarete Köfler and Silvia Caramelle, *Die beiden Frauen des Erzherzogs Sigmund von Österreich-Tirol. Schlern-Schriften*, 269 (Innsbruck: Universitätsverlag Wagner, 1982), 87–89. (This part was written by Köfler).

less of whether this is mentioned in the literary text. We are not informed about the heating of water, about soap or shampoo, but there are always bedrooms next to the baths, and both servants and maids assist the honored guests in getting the full enjoyment out of taking a bath, which is then concluded with dressing in elegant bath robes or other clothing. Literary texts are not the easiest sources regarding the study of everyday life in the pre-modern world, but a careful reading with that aspect in mind still reveals much about the relatively high level of hygiene and bathing culture already then.

We cannot really talk about the 'dirty' Middle Ages, and even less about the 'dirty' early modern age without encountering serious problems in the proper cultural-historical assessment. Sometimes conditions must have been miserable, true, but sometimes they were excellent, even compared with our own modern culture today, both in the western and eastern world. People survived and pro-created, they had medicine and could find good medical doctors,⁷⁷ and consequently many poets were quite happy also to include remarkable bath house scenes if appropriate for the narrative development.

In this context the German artist Israhel van Meckenem (ca. 1445–1503) deserves great recognition for his remarkable engraving of "The Children's Bath" (1480/1490, today at The Institute of Art, Chicago), which, despite its complex iconographic depiction of the family scene which is derived from classical models – children as *putti*⁷⁸ – speaks volumes about the common situation within all kinds of families who naturally took good care of their children and hence provided them with baths, and hence probably took baths themselves. The popular motif of the Fountain of Youth both in literature and the visual arts speaks volumes about the extensive availability of and interest in bathing culture, as reflected, for instance, in one of Hans Sachs's poems, "Der Jungbrunnen" (1557).⁷⁹

77 There is much research on medieval medicine; cf., for instance, Alain Touwaide, "Medicine," *Handbook of Medieval Culture: Fundamental Aspects and Conditions of the European Middle Ages*, ed. Albrecht Classen (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2015), vol. 2, 954–998; see now also the contributions to *Der Koch ist der bessere Arzt: Zum Verhältnis von Diätetik und Kulinarik im Mittelalter und in der Frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Andrea Hofmeister-Winter, Helmut W. Klug, and Karin Kranich. Mediävistik zwischen Forschung, Lehre und Öffentlichkeit, 8 (Frankfurt a. M.: Peter Lang, 2014).

78 Erika Langmuir, *Imagining Childhood* (New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 2006), 142.

79 Israhel van Meckenem: *Goldschmied u. Kupferstecher. Gest. 1503 in Bocholt / Zur 450. Wiedergekehr seines Todestages*, ed. Elisabeth Bröker (Bocholt : [Verein f. Heimatpflege], 1953); *Israhel van Meckenem: Kupferstiche des späten Mittelalters aus Westfalen. Katalog zur Ausstellung des Museums im Kloster Grafschaft*, 2. Juni-13. August 2000, Schmallenberg-Grafschaft. Schriften des Museums im Kloster Grafschaft (Schmallenberg: Museum im Kloster, 2000); for a biography

If the kings and nobles were so eager to get a good bath, why would not ordinary mothers be concerned about their children's health, hygiene, and hence their opportunity to get a bath, especially if they could afford it, which was probably very likely particularly in the wealthy late medieval cities? The situation might have changed in the following centuries, especially in the wake of the outbreak of new epidemics, such as syphilis, but this would be the topic of another paper. The sixteenth century witnessed the development of underwear which was to replace the bathing itself, which allowed people to keep 'clean' in appearance, at least, and to smell pleasantly due to the heavy use of perfumes, while in the Middle Ages a solid bathing culture was still the norm.⁸⁰ Also, we would have to probe much more in depth concerning the material conditions in late medieval and early modern cities as to the existence of public baths, private baths, the supply of flowing water, the existence of heating units big enough for hot baths, etc., and as to the situation in the countryside.

We can be certain, however, that bathing, cleaning, hence personal hygiene, bath houses, barbers, toilets, spas, and many other related aspects were very important already in the Middle Ages and the early modern time. In fact, the sixteenth century witnessed even the explosion of extensive medical and therapeutic literature focused on bathing, the beginning of balneology. The first German treatise on this subject matter was Felix Hemmerli's (ca. 1388/89–ca. 1460) *Tractatus de balneis naturalibus* from ca. 1450, based on Italian sources,⁸¹ and many

and a discussion of his work, see Anni Warburg, *Israhel van Meckenem: sein Leben, sein Werk und seine Bedeutung für die Kunst des ausgehenden 15. Jahrhunderts*. Forschungen zur Kunstgeschichte Westeuropas, 7 (Bonn: K. Schroeder, 1930); see also online at: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israhel_van_Meckenem (last accessed on April 21, 2015). For the history of childhood, see, for instance, *Childhood in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance: The Results of a Paradigm Shift in the History of Mentality*, ed. Albrecht Classen (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2005); J. Allan Mitchell, *Becoming Human: The Matter of the Medieval Child* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2014). As to the history of the motif of the 'Fountain of Youth,' see Classen, *Sex im Mittelalter* (see note 24), 29–30; Birgit Franke and Sigrid Schade, "Jungbrunnen und andere 'Erneuerungsbäder' im 15. und 16. Jahrhundert," *Erfindung des Menschen: Schöpfungsträume und Körperbilder 1500 – 2000*, ed. Richard von Dülmen (Vienna, Cologne, and Weimar: Böhlau, 1998), 197–212. Hans Sachs's text is available online at: <http://gutenberg.spiegel.de/buch/-5219/50> (last accessed on May 4, 2015).

80 ⁷eggy Fiess, "Das Bad des Fürsten: Badelust und Überhöhung im Barock," *Festschrift für Johannes Langner zum 65. Geburtstag am 1. Februar 1997*, ed. Klaus Gereon Beuckers. Karlsruher Schriften zur Kunstgeschichte, 1 (Münster: Lit, 1997), 107–121

81 Frank Fürbeth, "Ein Moralist als Wilderer: Felix Hemmerlis 'Tractatus de balneis naturalibus' (um 1450) und seine Rezeption in Deutschland," *Sudhoffs Archiv* 77.1 (1993): 79–113; id., *Heilquellen in der deutschen Wissensliteratur des Spätmittelalters: zur Genese und Funktion eines Paradigmas der Wissensvermittlung am Beispiel des "Tractatus de balneis naturalibus" von Felix*

contemporary poets added the world of baths as the critical backdrop to their narratives and poems, such as Hans Sachs's jest songs "Das pader thier" (1536), "Die neun ler im pad" (1536), "Ins pad ins flewleuglein" (1536), "Das narrenpad" (1536), "Der apt im wiltpad" (1537), "Das Lörles pad" (1538), "Eulenspiegel im pade" (1539), "Der padknecht" (1541), "Die puelschaft im pad" (1548), and "Die pürgerein im wiltpad" (1558).⁸² The myth of the 'dirty' past can be dismissed quite easily now, although it remains to be seen whether, or how, the popular, though erroneous opinions concerning those aspects can be changed. The variety of baths and bathing methods, of different social spaces in the bath house, and the regular references to baths in many texts both in the Middle Ages and the early modern age confirm that a major paradigm shift with respect to bodily hygiene might have happened since the seventeenth or eighteenth century allowing the establishment of this curious myth of the pre-modern world being so unclean and malodorous.

However, the new growth of balneological literature since the sixteenth century and the increasing interest in visiting spas for health reasons during the same time period might contradict that impression. I suspect that it might have been more likely that the strong use of the bath house motif in satirical context exposed that social space to ridicule and thus made it difficult in subsequent periods to return to a sober and natural discussion of the bath at large. Hence, a myth was born, which we now can resoundingly reject as mostly erroneous or outright wrong.⁸³ Privacy probably replaced public bathing, and new fashions also might have made personal hygiene considerably more difficult, but we can be absolutely certain that medieval society at large fully embraced the great value

Hemmerli und seiner Rezeption; mit einer Edition des Textes und seiner frühneuhochdeutschen Übersetzung. Wissenschaftsliteratur im Mittelalter, 42 (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2004).

82 The texts are available, originally printed in *Zeitschrift für Kulturgeschichte* 4 (1897), in *Die Fabeln und Schwänke in den Meistergesängen*, ed. Edmund Goetze and Carl Drescher. *Sämtliche Fabeln und Schwänke von Hans Sachs*, vols. 3, 4, and 6 (Halle a. d. S.: Max Niemeyer, 1900, 1903, and 1913); cf. also the online version available at: <https://books.google.com/books?id=oH-c9AQAAIAJ&pg=PA51&lpg=PA51&dq=Sachs,+Der+Baderknecht&source=bl&ots=hx1V0k-NB2&sig=rQmMNZILSw1z-LV0NuV6yZVRnU&hl=en&sa=X&ei=RN9HVVyeBN8u5ogTx8ICwCg&ved=0CCAQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=Sachs%2C%20Der%20Baderknecht&f=false>. The latter text is available online at: https://books.google.com/books?id=1WxBAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA352&lpg=PA352&dq=Sachs,+Der+Buhler+im+Bad&source=bl&ots=xrjmbkZwS_&sig=R5FabvgfVateA-DECRK9YtVsBRI&hl=en&sa=X&ei=KthHVazOGI3EogS17IGADw&ved=0CCwQ6AEwAg#v=onepage&q=Sachs%2C%20Der%20Buhler%20im%20Bad&f=false (last accessed on May 4, 2015). See also the contributions to this volume by David Tomíček and Thomas G. Benedek.

83 Loleit, *Wahrheit, Lüge, Fiktion* (see note 12), 353–56. Here I would also like to express my gratitude to Christopher R. Clason and Anne Scott for their valuable comments.

and importance of bathing and cleanliness, as much as they could realize it with their limited means.

Chiara Benati

The Field Surgery Manual Which Became a Medical Commonplace Book: Hans von Gersdorff's *Feldtbuch der Wundarzney* (1517) Translated into Low German

This contribution focuses on the sixteenth-century Low German version of Hans von Gersdorff's *Feldtbuch der Wundarzney*, one of the earliest and most influential vernacular surgical handbooks printed in Germany.¹ This fragment of a Low German translation of the field surgery manual (*Velt bock*) is inserted into a large manuscript collection of Low German medical texts (Copenhagen, Konge-like Bibliotek, GKS 1663 4^{to}), which can be defined as a medical commonplace book – in German *Arzneibuch* (Low German *arstedie* (*bok*)). Medical compendia of this kind, which were constituted by (short) treatises and recipes of various origin,² were transmitted throughout the Middle Ages, but, on the threshold to the Modern Age, they became larger and were more and more frequently conceived as personal medical reference works for the layman (German *Hausarzneibücher*).³

The comparison of the *Velt bock* with its High German source has shown that this is not the case of the Copenhagen manuscript, whose anonymous compiler was certainly an expert in the field, most likely a surgeon, who transcribed a series of medical and surgical concepts, techniques, and prescriptions, derived from various sources. This peculiarity of the transmission of the Low German text allows us to contextualize it within the everyday practices of a Northern German surgeon. In this respect, the analysis of the insertions into and additions to the *Velt bock* will show the relevance of a series of purely hygienic (sanitary) passages for the professional needs of the author of Copenhagen, GKS 1663 4^{to}, thus con-

1 On the role played by the vernacular in non-academic medical and surgical education, see Nancy G. Siraisi, *Medieval and Early Renaissance Medicine: An Introduction to Knowledge and Practice* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2007), 52–54.

2 See also Gundolf Keil, “Arzneibücher,” *Lexikon des Mittelalters*. Vol. 1: *Aachen bis Bettelordenkirchen*, ed. Robert-Henri Bautier (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 2002), col. 1091–94.

3 See also Gundolf Keil, “Arzneibuch,” *Enzyklopädie Medizingeschichte*. Vol. 1, ed. Werner E. Gerabek, Bernhard D. Haage, Gundolf Keil, and Wolfgang Wegner (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2007), 104–05.

tributing to a more global understanding of the importance of personal hygiene in early modern north German society.

1 Hans von Gersdorff

Johannes (Hans) von Gersdorff was a Straßburg surgeon whose name is mainly associated with his field surgery manual, the *Feldtbuch der Wundarzney* (1517). We do not know much about his biography, but in the preface to his work he introduces himself as “Mayster Hans von Gersdorff genant Schilhans / burger und wundartzet zü Straßburg”⁴ (Master Hans von Gersdorff also known as Schilhans, citizen and surgeon of Straßburg).

It is not known exactly when von Gersdorff was born, although one can assume a date of birth around 1455, since, in the *Feldtbuch*, he claims to have been trained as a field surgeon during the Burgundian Wars (1474–1477)⁵ and to have practiced for forty years.⁶ He worked in the *Antoniterspital*⁷ (St. Anthony’s Hospital) in Straßburg, which means he must have been in possession of Straßburg citizenship, which was necessary to pursue a profession in the city. This he could

⁴ Hans von Gersdorff, *Feldtbuch der Wundarznei*, mit einem Vorwort zum Neudruck von Johannes Steudel. (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1967), Preface. The transcription of this and all other quotations follows the suggestions by Werner Besch, “Zur Edition von deutschen Texten des 16. Jahrhunders,” *Alemannica: Landeskundliche Beiträge. Festschrift für Bruno Boesch zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Friedrich Maurer. Alemannisches Jahrbuch (Bühl, Baden: Konkordia, 1976), 392–411 and Lars-Arne Dannenberg, “Johannes von Gersdorff,” *Deutsches Literatur-Lexikon: Das Mittelalter. Autoren und Werke nach Themenkreisen und Gattungen*. Vol. 7: *Das wissensvermittelnde Schrifttum im 15. Jahrhundert*, ed. Wolfgang Achnitz (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2015), col. 1761–65.

⁵ See also Joachim Telle, “Hans von Gersdorff – ein Praktiker schreibt für den ungelehrten Wundarzt,” *Bibliotheca Palatina: Katalog zur Ausstellung vom 8. Juli-2. November 1986, Heiliggeistkirche Heidelberg. Textband*, ed. Elmar Mittler. Heidelberger Bibliotheksschriften, 24 (Heidelberg: Braus, 1986), 339–40.

⁶ von Gersdorff, *Feldtbuch* (see note 4), Preface: “hab ich züsamien gestellt ein gemein Feldtbüch der wundartzney / das ... / in der practick vnd mit der handt geübt / vnd bey .xl. jaren här gäntzlich durchgründt hab” (I have composed a manual of field surgery, which I have practiced for forty years and fathomed completely).

⁷ von Gersdorff, *Feldtbuch* (see note 4), LXXr: “vnd hab doch ein hundert glyd oder zwey abgeschnitten in sanct Anthonien hoff zü Straßburg / vnd vßwendig des hoffs” (and I have amputated one hundred or two hundred limbs inside and outside St. Anthony’s courtyard in Straßburg.)

have acquired by birth, marriage, or he could have bought it.⁸ Since his name does not appear in the lists of new citizens, it is reasonable to assume that he was born in Straßburg.⁹ Therefore, he is likely to have been the son of a certain Heinrich von Gersdorff, who was a barber and surgeon and who bought Straßburg citizenship on the Wednesday after Saint Andrew's feast (November 30th) in 1450.¹⁰ If this assumption is correct, it is likely that Hans became a surgeon in order to follow his father's footsteps,¹¹ and, parallel to this, at least one of his own sons would go on to follow Hans's example.¹²

After the end of the Burgundian Wars, he likely lived and worked in Straßburg until his death, which, according to Melanie Panse, must have occurred in the first half of the 1520s, rather than in 1529, as it is usually stated in the relevant research literature.¹³

2 The *Feldtbuch der Wundarzney*

The *Feldtbuch der Wundarzney* was printed for the first time in folio format in Straßburg in 1517 by Schott. The text, which is presented by its author as the

⁸ See also Charles Wittmer, "Straßburger Bürgerrecht: Vom Ursprung bis zum Jahre 1530," *Alemannisches Jahrbuch* (1961): 235–49; here 240.

⁹ See also Ernest Wickersheimer, "Hans von Gersdorff," *Neue deutsche Biographie*, vol. 6: *Gaál-Grasmann* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1964), 322–24.

¹⁰ See also Charles Wittmer and Charles Meyer, *Le livre de la bourgeoisie de la ville de Strasbourg: 1440–1530* (Strasbourg and Zurich: P. H. Heitz, 1948), 79.

¹¹ See also Melanie Panse, *Hans von Gersdorffs 'Feldtbuch der Wundarzney': Produktion, Präsentation und Rezeption von Wissen*. Trierer Beiträge zu den historischen Kulturwissenschaften, 7 (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2012), 27.

¹² See also Marie-Claude Weislinger, "Le 'Feldtbuch der Wundarzney' de Hans von Gersdorff (1517) et les débuts de la chirurgie de guerre et traumatologique moderne. Commentaires – Première traduction française – Confrontation aux conceptions de Hieronymus Brunschwig et d'Ambroise Paré," thèse pour le doctorat en médecine, Straßburg 1983, 20. This circumstance explains a passage in the *Feldtbuch*, in which von Gersdorff declares that at first he wanted to share his surgical knowledge only with his sons, but his friends and patients later convinced him to put his experience at the disposal of a wider public of surgeons and barbers. von Gersdorff, *Feldtbuch* (see note 4), Preface: "Vnd wiewol mein ernstlich fürnem allzeyt geweßen ist / solich secret kunst stuck meiner erfarnuß / allein meinen leibs erben vnd lyebsten sünen / als ein werdgeachten schatz sonderlich behalten wolt / so hat doch fürdrungen viler gütter gesellen / gönner / vnd freünd streng anligend bitt / vnd dobey die gemein gütthät so durch solich meiner practik entdeckung den barbyerer vnd wundärzten (die anders mein einfältiges schriben mit danck annemen vnd leßen werden) entston mag."

¹³ Panse, *Hans von Gersdorffs* (see note 11), 28.

result of his personal experience in surgical practice, appears, nevertheless, to be strongly dependent on some of the most authoritative medical sources of the time. The most evident influence seems to be that of Guy de Chauliac, one of the most eminent European surgeons of the fourteenth century: on the whole, some one-third of von Gersdorff's surgical manual derives directly from Guy's *Chirurgia Magna* (1363) and, a smaller part, from *Chirurgia Parva*.¹⁴ In particular, the chapters on anatomy and on the treatment of ulcers and other dermatological diseases can be traced back to this author. The chapters on wounds and fractures, on the other hand, are based on the works of Rogerius (before 1140—ca. 1195), with some references to Lanfranc of Milan (ca. 1250–1306), Ortolf of Bavaria (d. before 1339), and Hieronymus Brunschwig (ca. 1450—ca. 1512). The theory of phlebotomy derives from Johannes Kirchheimer (Ketham), while the *antidotarium* follows the teachings by Guy de Chauliac and Nicholas of Salerno.¹⁵ Moreover, some 160 authors are mentioned within the text, among whom are such authorities as Galen, Avicenna, Albucasis, and Hippocrates.¹⁶

The first edition of the handbook includes four treatises (*tractate*). In the first treatise, von Gersdorff deals mainly with anatomy, which, following Guy de Chauliac, is divided into twelve chapters.¹⁷ The thirteenth chapter is introduced by an engraving representing the 'counterfeit bloodletting manikin' (*Contrafacter Lasszman*¹⁸) and deals with the practice of phlebotomy. The first book ends with a description of the twelve zodiac signs and their features and with a table

¹⁴ It is still uncertain as to which language version of Guy's works were in Hans von Gersdorff's possession. According to Karl-Wilhelm Grabert, "Die nomina anatomica bei den deutschen Wundärzten Hieronymus Brunschwig und Hans von Gersdorff, ihre Beziehungen zu Guy de Chauliac und ihr Verhältnis zu den Jenenser Nomina anatomica des Jahres 1935," Ph. D. diss., University of Leipzig, 1943, 64, the anatomical treatise derives more or less directly from the Latin 1498 incunable print of *Chirurgia magna*. On the other hand, the therapeutic part of the handbook appears to be mainly based on some High German manuscripts, which, due to a long transmission, have detached themselves so much from the original that they often convey a hardly understandable message. See also Jan Frederiksen, "Johannes (Hans) von Gersdorff (Schielhans)," *Die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters. Verfasserlexikon. Vol. 4: Hildegard von Hürnheim – Koburger, Heinrich*, ed. Kurt Ruh, Gundolf Keil, Werner Schröder, Burghart Wachinger, and Franz Josef Worstbrock (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1983), 626–30; here 629.

¹⁵ See also Frederiksen, "Johannes (Hans)" (see note 14), 628.

¹⁶ See also Panse, *Hans von Gersdorffs* (see note 11), 59.

¹⁷ In order, skin and muscles, nerves, veins and arteries, bones and cartilages, and then, following the *a capite ad calcem* scheme, head, face, neck and spine, shoulders and arms, thorax, abdomen, genitals, and lower limbs.

¹⁸ Ludwig Choulant, *History and Bibliography of Anatomic Illustration in Its Relation to Anatomic Science and the Graphic Arts* (Chicago: The University of Chicago, 1930), 165 underlines that this plate had been especially engraved for Schott's first edition of von Gersdorff's *Feldtbuch*.

containing, ordered according to the traditional Roman numeration, the names and numbers of days of each month. In the second book – preceded by an illustration showing the ‘Wound Man’ – the author presents the different pathologies (mainly traumata, but also infectious and oncological diseases) which can be treated surgically, as well as their therapies. The seventeenth and eighteenth chapters of this treatise contain the *antidotarium*, that is, a collection of recipes for the various remedies a surgeon might need. The third book is completely dedicated to leprosy and other dermatological pathologies. The fourth and last book of the first edition of the text is composed of three Latin-German glossaries on anatomy (*Vocabularius Anathomie*), pathology (*Vocabularius Infirmitatum*), and on the herbs used in pharmacopoeia (*Vocabularius erbarum*).¹⁹

This first edition was followed by several others: eleven or twelve in quarto (Straßburg: Schott, 1526, 1527 (?), 1528, 1530, 1535; Augsburg: Steiner 1542; Frankfurt am Main: Gölfferich 1551 and Egenolff und Nachfolger 1551, 1556, 1576, 1598, 1606) and three or four in folio format (Straßburg: Grüninger 1519 and Schott, 1540, 1542 (?); Hagenau: Anshelm 1517–1518). In some of these, the original material has been integrated and given a new structure divided into seven books. There is, for example, the case of the *Feldtbüch der Wundartzney newlich gerückt / und gebessert* printed in 1528 by Johannes Schott in Straßburg. In 1540, the same publisher included two short treatises in the *Feldtbuch*: the German translation of Albucasis’s work (*Albucasi contrafayt*) and the German version of the *Chirromantia* by Jean d’Indagine. On the other hand, in some other editions the text has been shortened; in 1551, in Frankfurt am Main, Christian Egenolff entrusted Walter Ryff with the revision of von Gersdorff’s treatise in order to publish it in a new graphic form with the addition of some new illustrations taken from the works of Johannes Dryander, Konrad von Megenberg, and Mondino de’ Liucci. Later Frankfurt prints (1598 and 1606) end with the chapter on leprosy and do not include the above-mentioned Latin-German glossaries. This high number of editions and reprints is witness to the great popularity of the *Feldtbuch*, which is also corroborated by the fact that it was translated into Dutch (Amsterdam, Cornelis Claeß 1591, 1593, 1605; Jacob Theunisz Lootsman 1651; and Amsterdam and Harlem, Jan Everts Cloppenburgh 1622) and probably into Latin (Straßburg

¹⁹ On these glossaries, their structure and sources, see also Chiara Benati, “Surgeon or Lexicographer? The Latin-German Glossaries in Addendum to Hans von Gersdorff’s *Feldtbuch der Wundarzney*,” *Linguistica e Filologia* 33 (2013): 35–57.

1542 and Frankfurt am Main 1551), even though no copy of this latter translation has ever been found.²⁰

While the printed tradition of the text has been repeatedly taken into consideration by scholars, less attention has been paid to its manuscript tradition. Fragments of the *Feldtbuch* can, in fact, be found in three late manuscript collections of medical and surgical texts: Lucerne, Zentral- und Hochschulbibliothek, KB Pp 27 4^{to}, Copenhagen, Kongelige Bibliotek, Thott 253 8^{vo}, and Copenhagen, Kongelige Bibliotek, GKS 1663 4^{to}.²¹ This last one is particularly interesting for the study of the text tradition and circulation in Europe because it contains a large portion of a Low German version of Hans von Gersdorff's surgical handbook, thus representing the only extant evidence of the dissemination of this work in the Low German language area.

3 Copenhagen, Kongelige Bibliotek, GKS 1663 4^{to}: Physical Description and Content

Copenhagen, Kongelige Bibliotek, GKS 1663 4^{to} is a composite manuscript constituted by three parts, which were bound together in modern times:

1. Fol. 1–206, in quarto (ca. 215 x 152 mm) early sixteenth century, probably before 1540,²² written by a single hand (H 1) most likely in the region south of Lüneburg
2. Fol. 207–225, end of the fifteenth century, written by another, neater and more regular hand (H 2) and provided with red rubrics and initials²³

²⁰ See also Frederiksen “Johannes (Hans)” (see note 14), col. 627 and Panse, *Hans von Gersdorffs* (see note 8), 154.

²¹ See also Frederiksen, “Johannes (Hans)” (see note 14), col. 627.

²² The Roman digits MDXL, which can be found on the lower margin of fol. 227r and which are repeated on fol. 241v can be interpreted as the possible year of the manuscript's completion. See also Conrad Borchling, *Mittelniederdeutsche Handschriften in Skandinavien, Schleswig-Holstein, Mecklenburg und Vorpommern. Zweiter Reisebericht*. Nachrichten von der Königlichen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen. Philologisch-historische Klasse, 1900. (Beiheft) (Göttingen: Lüder Horstmann, 1900), 52–55, here 57.

²³ An edition of this portion of text has been provided by Agi Lindgren, “Ein Kopenhagener mittelniederdeutsches Arzneibuch aus dem Ende des 15. Jh.s,” *Würzburger medizinhistorische Mitteilungen* 4 (1986): 135–78, who noticed that fol. 217r–225v have erroneously been rebound after fol. 207r–216v, even though fol. 217r is clearly the first page of the fragment.

3. Fol. 226–241, in duodecimo (ca. 150 x 100 mm), written by H 1, in the same irregular *cursiva*

The early sixteenth-century parts of the manuscript, which are relevant in this context, show traces of the scribe's own leaf numeration on the top of the *recto* of some leaves: fol. 15–86 and 91–146 have been marked with Roman numbers from i to lxxiiij and from i to lxxvj, respectively, while fol. 147–170 and 171–204 are identified by Arabic numbers from 77 to 99 (with 84 appearing twice) and from 1 to 34 (in red ink). The presence of this original numeration has revealed the existence of two lacunae between fol. 73 and 74, where two leaves (lxj–lxij) are missing and between fol. 96 and 97, where fol. vij–xxvij have been lost.²⁴

As far as its contents are concerned, the manuscript may be defined as a collection of Middle Low German medical texts including:

- the fragment of a Low German translation of Hans von Gersdorff's *Feldtbuch der Wundarzney* known as *Dat velt bock* (fol. 1r–86v)
- *Dat kinder bock* (fol. 87r–146r)²⁵
- a collection of recipes for the preparation of unguents (fol. 146v–158r)
- a detailed explanation of some common medical verbs deriving from Latin (fol. 158v–166v)
- two paragraphs about anthrax, which probably constitute an addition to what comes after (fol. 170v)
- an alphabetical glossary on surgically treatable pathologies (fol. 171r–177v)
- an alphabetical glossary on medical terms and phrases (fol. 179r–204r)²⁶

²⁴ See also Borchling, *Mittelniederdeutsche Handschriften* (see note 22), and Panse, *Hans von Gersdorffs* (see note 11), 154.

²⁵ This Middle Low German handbook, preserved exclusively in GKS 1663 4^{vo}, consists of a treatise on phlebotomy, an incomplete calendar, and a series of prescriptions for pathologies, which are ordered from head to heel, and has been identified as a Middle Low German translation of the Latin treatise *Liber de aegritudinibus infantium* by Cornelius Roelans van Mecheln (1486). See also Agi Lindgren, “*Dat Kinderbock*,” *Die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters. Verfasserlexikon. Vol. 4: Hildegard von Hürnheim – Koburger, Heinrich*, ed. Kurt Ruh, Gundolf Keil, Werner Schröder, Burghart Wachinger, and Franz Josef Worstbrock (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1983), col. 1148–49 and Mike Malm, “*Kinderbock*,” *Deutsches Literatur-Lexikon: Das Mittelalter. Autoren und Werke nach Themenkreisen und Gattungen. Vol. 7: Das wissensvermittelnde Schrifttum im 15. Jahrhundert*, ed. Wolfgang Achtnitz (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2015), col. 1460–62.

²⁶ On this, see Chiara Benati, “A Medical Dictionary for Personal Usage: The Latin-Low German Glassary on fol. 179r-204r of Copenhagen, Royal Library, GKS 1663 4^{vo},” *Words Across History: Advances in Historical Lexicography and Lexicology*, ed. María Victoria Domínguez-Rodríguez, Alicia Rodríguez-Álvarez, Gregorio Rodríguez-Herrera, and Verónica C. Trujillo-González (Las

- a *practica* (fol. 226r–227r)
- a *practica*, mentioning the twelve months as well as the hours of the day (fol. 227v–240r).

Moreover, the analysis of the alphabetical glossary on fol. 179r–204r and of the cross-references constituting some of its glosses has proved that the manuscript, in its original form, included at least two other large (over 400 leaves altogether) works – most likely a surgical manual (*Ciurgia*) and a herbal (*Herbarius*) – which are now lost. The presence of the latter in the original concept of this medical commonplace book is also confirmed by the otherwise quite surprising absence of pharmacobotanical terms in the glossary.²⁷

4 *Dat velt bock* and Other Material in Copenhagen, GKS 1663 4^{to}, fol. 1r–86v

The fragment of the Low German translation of Hans von Gersdorff's *Feldtbuch der Wundarzney*, whose title – *Dat velt bock* – appears on fol. 1r together with that of the second text contained in the manuscript – *Dat kinder bock* – and is repeated on fol. 15r, is preceded by a short note on how to perform medicine correctly and on the impossibility of fully mastering this art, but also by two paragraphs containing therapeutic indications (fol. 2r), and by two reference instruments constituted by an analytical index to the text (fol. 3r–12v)²⁸ as well as by a short glossary of Latin terms (fol. 13r–14r).²⁹

The actual fragment transmits a series of apparently randomly ordered thematic chapters from the High German handbook. These deal, *inter alia*, with phlebotomy (*Ader latende*, fol. 15r), zodiac signs (*Van den teken*, fol. 20v), fistula (*Fistel*, fol. 21r), carbuncle (*Carbunculus*, fol. 23v), anthrax (*Antrox edder Antrax*, fol. 24v), ulcerated cancer (*Cancer ulceratum*, fol. 26r), estiomenus (*Estiomenus*, fol. 28r), stemming blood flow (*Blot stillen*, fol. 33v), leprosy (*Lepra*, fol. 34v),

Palmas de Gran Canaria: Servicio de Publicaciones y Difusión Científica de la Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, 2016), 54–66.

²⁷ See also Chiara Benati, “A Medical Dictionary” (see note 26), 59.

²⁸ See also Chiara Benati, “The Manuscript Version of Hans von Gersdorff's *Feldtbuch der Wundarzney* in Copenhagen GKS 1663 4^{to} and Its Relation to the Printed Tradition,” *Text Analyses and Interpretations: In Memory of Joachim Bumke (Kalamazoo Papers 2012–2013)*, ed. Sybille Jefferis. Göppinger Arbeiten zur Germanistik, 776 (Göppingen: Kümmerle, 2013), 291–334; here 298.

²⁹ See also Benati, “The Manuscript” (see note 28), 300.

morphea (*Morphea*, fol. 35v), the various remedies a surgeon has to know and use (*Medicina*, fol. 38v), head wounds (*Houet dat vorwundet iß*, fol. 45v), wounds to internal organs (*Ingeweyd vorwunth*, fol. 56r), and hemorrhoids (*Von den flot, Emorroidarum* fol. 61r). The beginning of each chapter is usually graphically marked by one or more words in bold. The same technique is also employed in the manuscript to signal subsections within a larger chapter or to draw the reader's attention to specific terms or passages.

A systematic comparison of the single portions of the manuscript text with their High German source – most likely the first, 1517 Straßburg edition – of von Gersdorff's manual³⁰ has shown that the ordering of the thematic sections and the lacunae mentioned above, are not the only aspects in which the two diverge. On the one hand, the source text appears to have been significantly shortened, e.g., taking for granted the anatomical compendium constituting the first treatise of the 1517 printed edition and systematically omitting all introductory considerations and discursive passages. On the other hand, a series of passages in Copenhagen GKS 1663 4^{to} does not find any correspondence in the printed tradition of the surgical handbook and had been added by the Low German translator. Some of these additions are simple explanations aimed at replacing both the anatomical compendium and visual aids such as the engraving of the 'bloodletting manikin,' which could help in precisely identifying a specific anatomical part, a vessel, or the exact points for bloodletting.

There is, for example, the case of the paragraph about the opening of the saphenous veins, which – in comparison with the 1517 Straßburg edition of the *Feldtbuch*³¹ – has been integrated with the indication of the position for bloodletting such veins, and with a consideration possibly concerning the distinction between the great and the small saphenous veins, their origins and positions:

Saphene sinh two aderen vnder an der voth sulen by den voten
 dat is scher midden an der verssen de geslagen sinh gut
 vor aufflopen vp lopen vnd swulst der hoden dusse
 is bynne wentes. Vnde de aderen Sciatica de iß buten an de vote

³⁰ See also Chiara Benati, "Zur Überlieferung von Hans von Gersdorffs *Feldtbuch der Wundrzney*: Die Handschrift Copenhagen GKS 1663 4^{to} und ihr Verhältnis zu den Druckfassungen," *Filologia Germanica – Germanic Philology* 6 (2014): 1–19; here 14–18.

³¹ von Gersdorff, *Feldtbuch* (see note 4), XVv: "Saphene seint zwei adern vnden an der fußhüly beyder füsszen / die geschlagen seint güt für vff lauffen vnd geschwullst der hoden" (Saphenous are two veins below the sole of both feet, which can be punctured against swelling and tumor of the testicles).

vnd dusse luteste kumpt von der sulen von buten vnd de erste alfa
 Saphena kumpt von der syden van bynnen³²

[Saphenous are two veins below the sole of the feet, more or less in the middle of the heel, which can be punctured against swelling and tumor inside the testicles. And vein *sciatica*, which is in the external part of the foot and the small one from the exterior of the sole and the first *alfa saphena* comes from the internal side.]

Other insertions are glosses translating and/or paraphrasing the meaning of specialized terms, such as, for example, the Latin expressions *morphea nigra*,³³ *unguentum album*,³⁴ and *nasalia*,³⁵ which have been explained as *dat is de zwarte morfee* (that is the black *morphea*), *dat is eine witte salue* (that is a white ointment), and *dat sint weken. de man in de nese holer stekt* (that are pieces, which are inserted in the nostrils), respectively, or the collective vernacular term *ingeweyde*,³⁶ which has been made explicit: *dat is Magen vnde dermen vnde blasen* (that is stomach, intestine, and bladder).

Some, more significant, additions to the original text contain a series of medical, surgical, or simply hygienic (sanitary) indications, which do not find any correspondence in the 1517 Early High German edition of von Gersdorff's work. This is particularly evident toward the end of the fragment (from fol.

³² Copenhagen, GKS 1663 4^{to}, 18v. See also Benati "The Manuscript" (see note 28), 308. All quotations from the Copenhagen manuscript have been transcribed diplomatically, preserving the *mise en page* (line interruption and words in bold), the spelling, and the punctuation of the original. The expansion of abbreviations (mainly nasal strokes) has been graphically marked (italics). Deletions and insertions have been maintained only when relevant and/or indicative of the conceptual process beyond the production of the manuscript (e.g., insertions glossing a specific terminus or suggesting the use of an alternative ingredient for a recipe).

³³ Compare von Gersdorff, *Feldtbuch* (see note 4), LXXXI: "als gesagt ist de morphea nigra" (as said about the *morphea nigra*) and Copenhagen, GKS 1663 4^{to}, 36v: "also dar secht is van morphea nigra: dat is de swart morfee:" (as said about the *morphea nigra*, which is the black *morphea*).

³⁴ Compare von Gersdorff, *Feldtbuch* (see note 4), LIII: "daz du vmb den schadenn salbest oder strichest vnguentum album" (Rub and massage the wound with *unguentum album*). Copenhagen, GKS 1663 4^{to}, 39v: "so make dattu vmme den scaden leggest saluest vnd streckest. vnguentum album. dat is ene witte salue" (Put *unguentum album*, that is a white ointment, onto the wound, rub and massage it).

³⁵ Compare von Gersdorff, *Feldtbuch* (see note 4), XXI: "mach nasalia" (Prepare *nasalia*) and Copenhagen, GKS 1663 4^{to}, 48r: "her make vth nasalia. dat sint weken. de man in de nese holer stekt" (Prepare *nasalia*, that are packings, which are inserted in the nostrils out of that).

³⁶ Compare von Gersdorff, *Feldtbuch* (see note 4), XXXI: "Von den weydwunden" (On the wounds of the viscera), and Copenhagen, GKS 1663 4^{to}, 56r: "Inge weyde vorwunth dat is Magen vnde dermen vnde blasen." (Wounded viscera, that is, stomach, intestine, and bladder).

63v onwards), where these additions constitute a sort of addendum to the Low German version of the surgical handbook. Nevertheless, some heterogeneous material has been inserted within the translation of the text as well.

These heterogeneous additions to the *Velt bock* have been analyzed in order to highlight the correspondences with other sources, to which they could be genetically related. The comparison between the insertions into and additions to the *Velt bock* and a corpus of Middle Low German medical compendia and of particularly popular surgical references both in Early High German and in Latin, has shown a limited, but significant, number of correspondences, which can be considered indicative of the cultural background of the compiler of the Copenhagen manuscript. In particular, some theoretical passages on the various types of wounds or of abscesses seem to derive – in an abbreviated and simplified form – from some of the most acknowledged surgical authorities of the time, such as Guy de Chauliac and Henry de Mondeville, while some specific prescriptions parallel those in other Middle Low German medical compendia, such as, most frequently, the *Arzneibuch des Johann van Segen* or the *Düdesche Arstodie*.³⁷

In this study, these insertions into and additions to the surgery manual will be dealt with from a different perspective, aiming both at distinguishing properly surgical indications from other medical and hygienic (sanitary) considerations, and attempting to understand why the latter should have been interesting for a person, who, as his rendering of the Early High German source clearly shows, was certainly an expert in the field. While, in fact, the insertion – within or at the end of the text – of further surgical material does not pose any conceptual problem, and may quite simply be explained by the compiler's wish to extend his surgical knowledge by consulting different sources and noting any potentially useful pieces of information, the reason for the interpolation of purely medical or hygienic (sanitary) passages in a surgical handbook is less evident and deserves further investigation.

³⁷ See also Chiara Benati, “Additions and Interpolations in the Low German Version of Hans von Gersdorff’s *Feldtbuch der Wundarzney*,” *Studies and New Texts of the ‘Nibelungenlied’, Walther, Neidhart, Oswald, and Other Works in Medieval German Literature: In Memory of Ulrich Müller II (Kalamazoo Papers 2014)*, ed. Sibylle Jefferis. Göppinger Arbeiten zur Germanistik, 780 (Göppingen: Kümmerle, 2015), 411–51.

5 Surgical Additions to the *Velt bock*

The distinction between medicine and surgery in the Middle Ages and the early modern period was not as clear-cut as it is today. For this reason, the most adequate criterion for discriminating between surgical and non-surgical additions to the Low German version of Hans von Gersdorff's *Feldtbuch der Wundarzney* appears to be the consistency with the definition of surgery given by those authors, who, at the time, were universally acknowledged as authorities in this domain. In this respect, particularly relevant seem to be, first, the definition of surgery inserted into the first chapter of Guy de Chauliac's *Chirurgia magna*, von Gersdorff's main source: "Chirurgia est scientia, docens modum & qualitatem operandi, principaliter consolidando, incidendo, & alias operationes manuum exercendo, sanans homines quatenus est possibile"³⁸ (Surgery is the science that teaches the various operations and how to perform them, mainly stabilizing and cutting and performing other operations with the hands, in order to heal people if possible), and the list of the three kinds of operations listed by the French physician and surgeon:

Operationes chirurgorum in prædictis partibus sunt tres, scilicet soluere continuum, iungere separatum, & extirpare superfluum. Soluitur continuum phlebotomando, & scalpendo: iungitur separatum, consolidando vulnera, & reducendo fracturas ac dislocationes: extirpatur superfluum, cum curantur apostemata, & glandulæ resecantur.³⁹

[Surgical operations on the above-mentioned parts are three, that is to divide what is joined, to join what it separated and to cut off what is too much. What is joined is divided through bloodletting and cutting; what is divided is joined stabilizing wounds and reducing fractures and twists; what is too much is cut off healing abscesses and tumors and resecting glands.]

Keeping in mind Guy's words, I will interpret as 'surgical' all insertions into and additions to the *Velt bock* providing indications about the diagnosis of and the cure for pathologies, which can be treated with one of these three types of operations.

The following is a short passage inserted on fol. 59r at the end of a paragraph corresponding to the final part of the eleventh chapter of the second treatise of the *Feldtbuch*:⁴⁰

³⁸ Guy de Chauliac, *Chirurgia magna Guidonis de Gauliaco*, ed. Gundolf Keil (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1976), 2.

³⁹ de Chauliac, *Chirurgia* (see note 38), 3.

⁴⁰ von Gersdorff, *Feldtbuch* (see note 4), XXXIIIr.

En ander Sede wegetreden offt vnortreden in botteren
dar smere de sennen vnde lede mede: Iß vor socht⁴¹

[Another one. Simmer plantain or knotweed in butter
and grease tendons, nerves and limbs with it. It has been proven.]

This short note, which ends by delivering assurance of the effectiveness of the procedure (*Iß vor socht*), is preceded by a sentence, not present in the original, recalling the pathology, which both the preceding and the following therapeutic indications refer to: “Dat iß van deme vor harden vnde krumpen Senen” (This is about the stiff and crooked nerves). It, therefore, represents an integration into the remedies, already mentioned to treat stiff limbs, a pathology, whose therapy could be included into the first category of operations listed by Guy, that is, those aimed at loosening what is pathologically joined, in this case the crooked and stiff nerves.

Operations to join what is separated are, on the other hand, clearly referred to in the long sections on the treatment of simple head wounds and of cuts, which have been transcribed in the Copenhagen manuscript on fol. 65v and 66r, respectively. These additions to the *Velt bock* recall some analogous indications given in other surgical sources, such as by Henri de Mondeville,⁴² Guy de Chauliac⁴³ or Hieronymus Brunschwig,⁴⁴ without, however, corresponding precisely to any one such source. The passage on simple wounds (“Van den entfoldigen wunden”), for example, takes up some of the classical criteria for the classification of wounds, such as etiology, position and pain caused to the patient:

Van den entfoldigen wunden Tom ersten hebbe acht
wo de wunde iß komen offt myt watterley wapen se makt iß ...
wen de steke nicht geroret hefft ene sene adern, edder en fel, edder en scnurlin
edder ene muß: ... So de smerte nicht grot iß, ...
Iß ouerst de wedage grot so isset ein teken:
Dat de sen ader: edder ein fel, edder ein knake edder ene
muß gesteken iß ...⁴⁵

⁴¹ Copenhagen, GKS 1663 4^{to}, 59r.

⁴² Henri de Mondeville, *Die Chirurgie des Heinrich von Mondeville (Hermonaville) nach Berliner, Erfurter und Pariser Codices*, ed. Julius Leopold Pagel (Berlin: August Hirschwald, 1892), 211–15.

⁴³ de Chauliac, *Chirurgia* (see note 38), 119–29.

⁴⁴ Hieronymus Brunschwig, *Das Buch der Cirurgia des Hieronymus Brunschwig*, ed. Gustav Klein. Alte Meister der Medizin und Naturkunde in Facsimile-Ausgaben und Neudrucken nach Werken des 15.–18. Jahrhunderts, 3 (Munich: Kuhn, 1911), 22–30.

⁴⁵ Copenhagen, GKS 1663 4^{to}, 65v–66r.

[About simple wounds. First of all, pay attention to where the wound comes from or with which weapon it was made ... if the stab has not touched a nerve, or a membrane, a tendon or a muscle ... When the pain is not great ... when, on the other hand, the pain is great, this is a sign that a nerve, membrane, bone or muscle has been hurt ...]

All prescriptions for the treatment of cancer can be considered as representative of the third typology of surgical interventions described in Guy's *Chirurgia magna*, since their ultimate aim is to remove an abnormal excrescence. A series of additions and insertions in the *Velt bock* deal with this topic. This is, for example, the case of the three short prescriptions, which have been extemporaneously annotated on the lower margin of fol. 27v following a description of a series of similar remedies taken from the 22nd and 23rd chapter of the second treatise of the *Feldtbuch der Wundarzney*.⁴⁶

Vor deme Creuet Nym knofflokß sap vnde nacht scaden sap mengt
 tho samende sterkt en dat sere
 Item de den Creuet bynnen wendich in der hut hefft vth tho driuende
 so sede gransik in bere vnde drincke dar von
 Ok wert he vors ... ckt vnde vordreuen myt segen drincke myt oleum
 wyn vormenget vnde dar in gelecht⁴⁷

[Against cancer. Take garlic juice and nightshade juice mixed together. It strengthens much. In the same manner, if one has cancer inside the skin, simmer *potentilla*⁴⁸ in beer and give one to drink out of it, in order to cast the cancer out. Similarly, if it has been ... and expelled with blessings, drink wine, which has been mixed with oil and has been poured in it.]

Another passage in the Low German commonplace book is aimed at healing cancer and suggests, among other things, to put a living cat into a pot and to roast it to powder:

Creueth Nym ene katten, vnde sette de leuendich in
 enen pot: vnd bynt den alle vaste tho vnde sette den vp dat
 vur, vnd berne se to puluer, vnd strowe dat puluer in
 de wunden, So vor drifftu ene: Jsette ene vrouwe, sonym
 ene katten, Isset ein man: Sonym enen kater iedes,

⁴⁶ von Gersdorff, *Feldtbuch* (see note 4), LXIIIV–LXXv.

⁴⁷ Copenhagen, GKS 1663 4^{to}, 27v.

⁴⁸ See also Agi Lingdren, *Ein Stockholmer mittelniederdeutsches Arzneibuch aus der zweiten Hälfte des 15. Jahrhunderts*. Acta universitatis stockholmiensis. Stockholmer germanistische Forschungen, 5 (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1967), 185.

Offtnym menge scegen dreck myt olden wyn dar vp gelecht: Offt
verschen vnde warmen scapeß dreck myt blywit dar vp gelecht⁴⁹

[Cancer. Take a cat and put it alive in a pot. Bind it fast and put it onto the fire. Burn it to powder and strew the powder into the wound. In this way you drive it out. If the patient is a woman, take a female cat; if, on the other hand, the patient is a man, take a tomcat, one for each patient. Alternatively, take a great quantity of goat droppings with old wine laid onto it. Or take fresh and warm sheep droppings with white lead laid onto it.]

The first of these prescriptions represents a *unicum* within the corpus of Middle Low German medical compendia, which I took into consideration for my previous research on the additions and insertions to the Low German version of von Gersdorff's work and, to the best of my knowledge, in folk medical tradition as well. On the one hand, in fact, medieval folk medicine has often had recourse to cat-based remedies,⁵⁰ such as the one included in the *Düdesche Arstedie*,⁵¹ prescribing the killing, burying, and drying of a black cat to obtain a powder, which, once burnt, could be used for the treatment of lepers.⁵² On the other hand, the use of cat-based remedies for the treatment of cancer was extremely rare,⁵³ as well as the recommendation of choosing the animal according to the gender of the

⁴⁹ Copenhagen, GKS 1663 4^{to}, 77v.

⁵⁰ See also *Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens*. Band 4/Teil 1: Vol. 4, Part 1 *Hieb- und stichfest – knistern*, ed. Eduard Hoffmann-Krayer, Hanns Bächthold-Stäubli. Handwörterbücher zur deutschen Volkskunde. Abteilung 1. Aberglaube (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2011), 1121–23; Johannes Jühling, *Die Tiere in der deutschen Volksmedizin alter und neuer Zeit. Mit einem Anhange von Segen etc. Nach den in der Kgl. öffentl. Bibliothek zu Dresden vorhandenen gedruckten und ungedruckten Quellen* (Wittweida: Polytechnische Buchhandlung R. Schulze, 1900), 99–106; *Vergleichende Volksmedizin. Eine Darstellung volksmedizinischer Sitten und Gebräuche, Anschauungen und Heilfaktoren, des Aberglaubens und der Zaubermedizin*, ed. Dr. Oskar von Hovorka and Dr. Adolf Kronfeld. Vol. 1 (Stuttgart: Strecker & Schröder, 1909), 233–34; Laurence Bobis, “Des usages du chat dans la médecine de la fin de l'antiquité et du moyen âge,” *Milieux naturels, espaces sociaux: études offertes à Robert Delort*, ed. Elizabeth Mornet and Franco Morenzoni (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne: 1997), 717–28.

⁵¹ On this late fourteenth-century medical compilation, see Jan Frederiksen, “Düdesche Arstedie,” *Die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters. Verfasserlexikon*. Vol. 2: *Comitis, Gerhard – Gerstenberg, Wigand*, ed. Kurt Ruh, Gundolf Keil, Werner Schröder, Burghart Wachinger, and Franz Josef Worstbrock (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1979), 238–39.

⁵² *Das Gothaer mittelniederdeutsche Arzneibuch und seine Sippe*, ed. Sven Norrbom (Hamburg: Hartung, 1921), 144: “Wedder den spittaelnym vnde dode ene swarte katten vnde graf se in de erden dat se vuel werde, vnde laet se denne wedder droghen, so berne se to puluere vnde eth dath” (Against leper, take a black cat, kill and bury it into the earth until it gets rotten and let it dry again, then burn it to powder and eat it).

⁵³ Jühling, *Die Tiere in der deutschen Volksmedizin* (see note 50), 100, mentions one single remedy of this type for cancer: “Für den Krebs, so den Frawen Ihre brüste frist. Nim Harn von einer

patient,⁵⁴ while the reference to the use of a living animal seems to be particular to the Copenhagen manuscript.

Apart from the prescriptions integrating and/or referring to procedures pertaining to Guy's categories, other passages added to the *Velt bock* can be considered as 'surgical'. Every surgeon, for example, has to deal with the challenge of trying to avoid and/or stop bleeding. For this reason, all surgical sources include a series of remedies to handle bleeding. This is also true for the Low German fragment of the *Feldtbuch der Wundarzney*,⁵⁵ the indications of which on blood staunching have been repeatedly integrated elsewhere with new material of various types. Instructions for the preparation of a haemostatic agent are, for example, given in an addition to the *Velt bock* on fol. 66v, which corresponds to an analogous recipe in both Hieronymus Brunschwig's *Buch der Cirurgia*⁵⁶ and its Low German adaptation, *Dat Boek der Wundenartzstedye*,⁵⁷ where it is attributed to Lanfranc of Milan:

schwartzenn Katzen und salbe die damit; es vorgehet" (For breast cancer. Take the urine of a black cat and rub the breast with it. It heals).

54 See Jühling, *Die Tiere in der deutschen Volksmedizin* (see note 50), 102: "Schmiere die füße oder hende mit wilder katzen feist, den mannen vom Kater, den Weibern von der katzenn, Zeucht allen frost herauß" (Rub the feet or the and with the feet of a wild cat, a male for the men, a female for the women. It takes out all the frost).

55 Copenhagen, GKS 1663 4^{to}, 33v–34r.

56 Brunschwig, *Das Buch* (see note 44): "Der .vij. modus sint die ertzeny die man dar vf leit die vorgenanten wirkung zü volbringen als ich gesprochen hon zü dem ersten als lanckfrancus spricht / daz du vf leist din finger vf den fluß des blütes biß es etwas gerin / so soltu haben ein puluer gemacht von Wissem litteren wirouch ij. teil Aloepaticum. j. teil. Daz puluer werd getemperiert mit eyer clar in dicke des hunigs / dar in werd genette weich hasen har clein gesnitten vnd vf die wunde geglet dißer artzney nit gelich ist zü dem plütt verstellen vnd die adern zü setzen vnd heilen" (The seventh method to staunch blood consists in using remedies to achieve the desired effect, as I have said before. As Lanfranc says, you should press your finger onto the bleeding site, until it bleeds only a little. Then you should have a powder made of two parts pure white incense and one part aloe. Mix this powder with egg white, until it reaches the consistency of honey. Then add some soft hare hair, which has been cut small and apply the preparation to the wound. This remedy has no equal, when it comes to blood staunching and healing veins and arteries).

57 Chiara Benati, *Dat Boek der Wundenartzstedye und der niederdeutsche chirurgische Fachwortschatz*. Göppinger Arbeiten zur Germanistik, 771 (Göppingen: Kümmerle Verlag, 2012), 48: "De .vij. modus / synt de artzstedye de men dar vp legget de vorgenanten werkinge to vullenbringen / so yk gespraken hebbe. To deme ersten alze Lankfrancus sprykt / dattu den vyngher legghest vp den flöte des blodes / wente dat yd ychteswat gerynne / so schaltu hebben eyn puluer ghema- ket van eyneme litteren wijroek des .ij. deel. Aleopaticum eyn deel. Dat puluer wert getemper- et myt eyer klår (eyer wyt) yn dicke des honniges. Dar yn wert genettet week hazenhår. Kleyn

Blot stillen. weret ith sake dat in solcker handinge dat blot to vele flote: Dat machstu alduß stillen, Nym halff wirok vnd halff aloe: vnde puluer dit. vnd menget myt eyer klar: dat ith werde also hornich: dar to hasen har klene gesneden: dat menge dar manck, dar na legge enen vynger vp de blodende wunden edder adern, vnd holt de also ene stunde lanck, vnd legge dar mede van dusseme plaster vp de wunden, vnd by lyuenym dat plaster nycht drade aff, were ith ouerst sake: dat dath plaster aff gebacken were. So legge ein ander plaster dar vp vnd dat vth gestreken iß, dat ith dat erste weke: dar nanym dath myt ein ander: dar mede de ader nicht wedder en ga vnde Dusse arstedie hefft nenen liken⁵⁸

[Blood staunching. In case too much blood flowing during one of those procedures, you can staunch it in this way: take half incense and half aloe and reduce them to powder. Mix them with egg white until it gets the consistency of honey. Then add some hare hair, which has been thinly chopped, and stir for a while. After that lay a finger on the bleeding wound or vessel and hold it there for an hour. In the meantime, put this emplastrum onto the wound and do not remove it too quickly. If the plaster dries too much, lay another one onto it and stretch it out well, so that it softens the first one. Then remove both of them. In this way, the vessel will not bleed again. This remedy has no equal.]

Another passage in the Copenhagen manuscript, on the other hand, transmits another kind of remedy – a charm – to staunch blood:

Blot bespreck also: Longinuß stack vnseren heren got dorch syne siden Dar vth flot water vnde blot dar mede stilde he synen Dot Jk bede dy blot dorch deß hilligen blodeß willen Dattu stille steist. her nicht mer en vth geist: Dit sprik Dre male vnde stede tor tijth en cruce myt deme munde dar ouer gemaktt vnde dre vader vnser offt pater noster⁵⁹

[Enchant blood in this way: Longinus pierced Our Lord in His side. Blood and water flew out of it, with which he appeased his death. I beg, blood, for the sake of the Holy Blood, that you stand still and do not flow anymore. Pronounce this three times and every time make a cross with the mouth over the wound and recite three Lord's Prayers or *Pater Noster*.]

gesneden / vnd vp de wunden gelecht. Desser artzstedye nicht gelijk ys to der styllyng des blodes vnd de aderen to setten vnd tho helen.”

⁵⁸ Copenhagen, GKS 1663 4^{to}, 66v.

⁵⁹ Copenhagen, GKS 1663 4^{to}, 34r. On this charm and on its relation to the High and Low German Longinus tradition, see Chiara Benati, “Eine neue niederdeutsche Fassung des Longinussegens zur Blutstillung,” *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum und deutsche Literatur* 145 (2016), 89–97.

6 Non-surgical additions to the *Velt bock*

The insertions and additions to the *Velt bock*, which do not comply with the criterion described above, deal with a wide range of different topics and need, therefore, to be evaluated singularly. Some textual modifications do not convey any new sanitary indications, but are simply aimed at explaining or clarifying one or more of the passages of Hans von Gersdorff's surgical manual. This is the case with respect to the insertion in the lower margin of fol. 33r following the description of a series of remedies for gangrene (*hitte brant*), originally belonging to the last (23rd) chapter of the second treatise of the *Feldtbuch der Wundarzney*⁶⁰:

Item alle water her vore afft bouen geleszen hefft von Noten
 efft van gronen noten. Dat mostu alle vorstan von
 gronen Slo noten: Accasia genanth

[Similarly, all above and below mentioned aquae have nut or green nut. All these names mean green sloe nut, also called acacia.]

This is a terminological explanation of the name of the main ingredient employed in the preparation of a series of aquae⁶¹: it suggests that the ingredients mentioned as *not* ("nut"), *grone not* ("green nut") and *grone Slo not*⁶² ("green sloe nut") all correspond to the classical term *accasia* ("acacia"). The importance of this explanation is graphically marked by the presence, on the left margin, of a *manicula*, pointing at its first word. Furthermore, the thematic connection among the prescriptions on fol. 33r is also stressed by the marginal note *Slo note*, which we can read on the right margin of this very leaf by rotating the manuscript 90 degrees counter-clockwise.⁶³

⁶⁰ See also von Gersdorff, *Feldtbuch* (see note 4), LXIXr–LXXv.

⁶¹ Copenhagen, GKS 1663 4^{to}, 32v–33r.

⁶² The Low German compound *slo not* can be interpreted as a rendering of High German *schlehe* (*prunus spinosa*) (*safft*), which systematically recurs in medieval and early modern botanical glossaries as translation for *acacia*. Compare Johannes de Cuba, *Gart der Gesundheit* (Straßburg: Johann Grüninger, 1485), XXVI: "Accacia. Schleen safft" or the glossary at the end of the first printed edition of Hans von Gersdorff's work (von Gersdorff, *Feldtbuch* (see note 4), LXXXIX): "Acacia. schlehen safft". The second element of the compound, *not*, suggests the compiler of Copenhagen, GKS 1663 4^{to} was referring to the berries of the sloe rather than to their juice (*safft*), as the aforementioned glossaries do.

⁶³ *Marginalia* of this kind are not uncommon in Copenhagen, GKS 1663 4^{to} and can have different functions: they can convey paratextual information on the structure of the text, e.g., highlighting, as in this case, a keyword of a certain paragraph or text portion or they can be used to explain a term or concept, which, at a later stage, must have appeared partly or completely

Another explanatory insertion in the *Velt bock* seems to be the one on the upper margin of fol. 38r:

Scabieß iß ... efft bledder ... prurituß iß bynnen in der hut sunder
bleddern de dat ... vnd noth dat stede klouwen⁶⁴

[Scabies is ... or blisters ... itch is within the skin without blisters, which ... and it is necessary to scratch the spot.]

Though not completely readable, these two lines appear to be undoubtedly related to the chapter dedicated to scabies and itch, which corresponds to the paragraph of the Early High German original entitled *Von Grind vnd rud*⁶⁵ (About slough and scab) and which begins on this very leaf. The presence of the two parallel structures *scabieß iß ...* and *prurituß iß ...* suggests the scribe tried to distinguish between the two terms, which, in the following chapter, are always associated.⁶⁶

Another group of additions to the Low German version of the *Feldtbuch* deals with non-surgical pathologies, such as, for example, ophthalmological condi-

unclear. This is, for example, the case of the prescription on fol. 33v for blood staunching in case of a very small wound: “Ist de wunde so klene: dattu se myt ener noth scelle bedecken kanst: vnd dat blot nycht stan wol So nym swart pick: dat iss Colofonia. vnd sere late dat: vnd gete dat in ene note fallen. vnd stulpe dat so ouer de wunden so noth ith myt gewalt slan” (If the wound is so small that you can cover it with a nutshell and the bleeding cannot be stopped, then take black pitch, that is *Colofonia*, melt it and pour it in a nut and turn it over the wound, use force, if necessary), which corresponds to von Gersdorff, *Feldtbuch* (see note 4), XXIXv: “Ist die wund also klein das du sye mit einer nusszschalen bedecken magst / vnd das blüt nit verston wil / so nim schwartz bech vnd zerlossz das / vnnd geüssz es in die nusszschalen / vnd stürtz dann die nusszschal über die wunden / so müssz es mit gewalt verston.” (If the wound is so small that you can cover it with a nutshell and the blood cannot be staunched, then take black pitch and melt it and pour it into the nutshell. Then turn the nutshell over the wound. This must be done with force). In this prescription, a reference mark before *swart pick* directs the reader to the left margin, where the words *Grikisch pick* can be read by rotating the manuscript. The insertion of this marginal note suggests that the vernacular expression *swart pick*, which in the manuscript had already been paired with its classical counterpart *colofonia*, was not sufficiently clear, so that the scribe added the vernacular translation of *colofonia* given in the pharmacobotanical bilingual glossary at the end of the *Feldtbuch*. Compare von Gersdorff, *Feldtbuch* (see note 4), XC^r.

⁶⁴ Copenhagen, GKS 1663 4^{to}, 38r.

⁶⁵ See also von Gersdorff, *Feldtbuch*, (see note 4), LXXXIV.

⁶⁶ Compare Copenhagen, GKS 1663 4^{to}, fol. 38r: “**Item** Scabieß vnde prurituß. grit edder rude. vnde iß ene vor mengeringe der hut myt sweren” (Similarly scabies and itch, slough or scab. It is a proliferation in the skin, which causes pain).

tions. In the Copenhagen manuscript we find quite a long section on eye pain.⁶⁷ This includes a series of recipes for the preparation of collyria, which can be used to cleanse the eyes and assuage the pain and irritation arising from various pathologies. In case of hot pain (*hitte wedage*), the simple application of an eye salve, made of foamed egg white, is sufficient. (This very therapy is prescribed

67 Copenhagen, GKS 1663 4^{to}, 70r-70v: “**Ogen**: vor alle hitte wedage der ogen: Nym eyer klar wol geluttert geslagen vnd schumet. vnd make dar ein Collirium aff. vnd legge dar ouer dat oge, So ouerst dat oge iß geswollen: rot: hittich edder droppende offt ith ok schir gewunth were: So late tom ersten de houet adern slan. vnd so leddigen dat houet. vnd do dar tho kold dinge: Dar na so bruke dat na gescreuene Collirium. So nym frauwen milck dede ein megedken soget. vnd sprutte de in de ogen, ok machstu dat plaster maken. rosen wit vnde roth, witrosen ^{rode rosen} vnd rot sandeln islikes j vutz, gersten mel ij vuntz, Canfer j dragma. menget myt rosen water: wen de flote also vp hort to fleten, so menge se dorch myt rosen water. vnd en weynich soltz: wil dat nicht helpen so bruke en Collirium van wirok ripe to makende dar na en puluer van ... dar mede to reynigen Ith begifft sik ouerlanck dar na sulker swulste ein klen swerken edder bledderken wert in den oge. sulckeß vor driff myt deme witten Collirium. dat legert de wedage. Get ith aff so hele ith myt enim Collirium van bley: Vnde de vnreynicheit de dar na blyfft in den oge appell, dat nymph hin wech oges dreck: en Collirium dar vth gemakst Wan man makt Collirium *album* edder wit collirium. So nym rein bly wit x dragmaß, Sarcocolla grauelik iij dragma: krafft mel ij dragma, dragantum j dragma, opium j dragma, ^{stotet} stotet vnd puluert alle wol vnd menget myt regen water vnd ryueth wol vp enen normalen sten dar na make pillen dar van: szo grot. also linsen. vnd wen ith noth iß: So sere late ene myth frauwen melcke. vnd do dat in de ogen En ander Collirium van wirok dat ripet de apostemen der ogen So nym wirok x dragma, antimonium: Sarcocolla ana v dragma. Saffran ij dragma dat menge myt water van fenum grecum. dat ith ein Collirium werde En Collirium van bley. dat reyniget vnd makt sunth de ogen sweren ...” (Eyes. Against the hot pain of the eyes: take egg white, whip it until it foams. Make a collyrium out of it and lay it onto the eye. If, on the other hand, the eye is swollen, red, irritated or watering or if it happens to be wounded, then puncture the head arteries and then let the head free and apply cold compresses. After that use the collyrium described below. Take human breast milk, which is being used to feed a little girl, and spray it into the eyes. You can also prepare a plaster: white and red roses, red sandal, one fifth part of each, barley flour, two fifths, one dragma camphor, mix them with rose water, when it stops flowing, mix it with rose water and a bit of salt. If this does not help, use a collyrium made of incense to mature and then ... powder to clean the eyes. If a small blister or pain in the eye arises after these conditions, they can be treated with the white collyrium, which mitigates the pain. If it opens, heal it with a collyrium made of lead: it takes away the impurities, which remain in the eyeball. How to prepare the collyrium *album* or white collyrium: take pure white lead, ten dragmas, grey sarcocolla, three dragmas, amyrum, two dragmas, vitriol, one dragma, opium, one dragma, reduce all of them to powder and mix them with rain water and rub the mixture on a stone and make pills out of that. They must be as big as lentils. When it is necessary, dissolve one of them in human breast milk and put it into the eye. Another collyrium made of incense, which matures abscesses of the eyes. Take incense, x dragmas, antimony and sarcocolla, five dragmas each, saffron, two dragmas. Mix them with fenugreek water, until it becomes a collyrium. A collyrium made of lead, which cleanses and heals ophthalmological conditions ...).

in the *Arzneibuch des Johan van Segen* for a different symptomatology: red and swollen eyes.⁶⁸⁾ In other cases of eye pain, different procedures are required: when the eyes are swollen, irritated, watering or wounded (*So ouerst dat oge ijß geswollen: rot: hittich edder droppende offt ith ok schir gewunth were*), bloodletting in the head is necessary (*So late tom ersten de houet adern slan*).

Phlebotomy was a procedure usually performed by surgeons, which could explain the insertion of this passage into the Copenhagen manuscript. Since some ophthalmological conditions required surgery, a surgeon – and the compiler of Copenhagen, GKS 1663 4^{to} was almost certainly a surgeon – needed to know about such conditions and to distinguish between those he could treat and those not requiring his intervention. Furthermore, in the case of a small tumescence or pustule in the eye, the correct prescription is a white collyrium and a lead-based ointment. In the manuscript, both preparations are described in detail.

Other prescriptions of this type are aimed at treating itching eyes (*jocken ogen*),⁶⁹ scabs and scurf in the eye (*grint vnd scuppen in den ogen*),⁷⁰ excessive lachrymation (*tranen*),⁷¹ and stains in the eyes (*flecken*).⁷²

Non-surgical additions also deal with common – generally serious – medical conditions not requiring surgical intervention, such as articular pain (*wedage*

68 Helny Alstermark, *Das Arzneibuch des Johan van Segen*. Acta universitatis stockholmiensis. Stockholmer germanistische Forschungen, 22 (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1977), 106: “Wem de auwen geswollen vnd rot sint. Wem de auwen geswollen vnd rot sint van dem blude, sonym dat witte van dem egg vnd lege et darvf.” (When one’s eyes are swollen and red. When one’s eyes are swollen and red of blood, take the white of an eye and lay it onto them). On this fifteenth-century medical collection and on its author, see also Gundolf Keil, “Johann van Seghen (Siegen),” *Die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters. Verfasserlexikon*. Vol. 4: *Hildegard von Hürnheim-Koburger, Heinrich*, ed. Kurt Ruh, Gundolf Keil, Werner Schröder, Burghart Wachinger, and Franz Josef Worstbrock (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1983), 743–44.

69 Copenhagen, GKS 1663 4^{to}, 70v.

70 Copenhagen, GKS 1663 4^{to}, 70v.

71 Copenhagen, GKS 1663 4^{to}, 70v.

72 Copenhagen, GKS 1663 4^{to}, 71r.

der ledēn),⁷³ syphilis (*franzosen*),⁷⁴ pediatric indigestion,⁷⁵ nosebleed (*nesze bloden*),⁷⁶ haematochezia (*rot stolgank*)⁷⁷ or insomnia.⁷⁸

A paragraph on fol. 71r gives an indication on how to prevent feet from falling off:

Von deme de vote vth valleth, Sonym queden edder
kutten. vnd snyde de to klenen schyuen: de legge vppe dat
vur: dat de schyuen het werden dat legge vp de seren
vote: so du hetest lyden machst: So helet dat to hant,⁷⁹

[When one's foot is about to fall off, take quince, slice it thinly and put it onto the fire, so that the slices become hot and lay them onto the sore foot, as hot as you can bear it. In this way, it will heal immediately.]

This remedy, consisting in applying thin slices of burnt quince – as hot as the patient can bear it – on the foot, is described in a series of Middle Low German

⁷³ Copenhagen, GKS 1663 4^{to}, 74v: “**Vor** de wedage der lede dar mede to smerende Nym en verdel honnigeß. iiiij lot kopperslach, ij lot alluns, ij lot spons gron, ij lot terpentin” (A preparation to smear against articular pain. Take one fourth honey, four parts, copper scales, four parts, alum, two parts, copper acetate, two parts, turpentine, two parts).

⁷⁴ See for example Copenhagen, GKS 1663 4^{to}, 74v: “**Fransozen** Ene gude hol salue to makende Nym iiiij lot quicsluer, iiiij lot lorberen: ij lot witten sweuel, ij lot grauwen sweuel, j lot witten harpoiß, j loth branden allun, j lot mastix, ij lot witten wirok, ij lot spons gron, ij lot blywit, ij lot suluer glede, ij lot terpentin, vnd j punt vetteß etc.” (Syphilis. To prepare a good ointment take four parts quicksilver, four parts laurel, three parts white sulfur, two parts gray sulfur, one part white pitch, one part burnt alum, one part mastic, two parts white incense, two parts copper acetate, two parts white lead, two parts silver slag, two parts turpentine, one pound fat, etc.).

⁷⁵ Copenhagen, GKS 1663 4^{to}, 37v: “**Item** Ein kinth dat vele Fresszen hefft drincke gemate honnige sacht myt bere” (Similarly, when a child has eaten too much, he should drink sweet honey with beer).

⁷⁶ Copenhagen, GKS 1663 4^{to}, 83r: “**Nesze bloden** Nym dat mark offt pedik van deme flede snydet in klene stucken stuckt in de nese ith iß vor socht” (Nosebleed. Take the internal part of the elder, cut it into small pieces and insert them in the nose. It has been proven).

⁷⁷ Copenhagen, GKS 1663 4^{to}, 80r: “**Rot stolgank**: Dit iß de rode blot ganck beyde der mans vnd frauweß personen, vnd ok der vrouwen flote. dar to iß gut wegebraden water, gemente myt boluß armenuß: offt myt den eddelen stene Ametisteß” (Hematochezia, which is the red blood flow both of the man and of the woman and also the menstruum. For this condition, it is good to use plaintain water, mixed with Armenian bole, or with the gem amethyst).

⁷⁸ Copenhagen, GKS 1663 4^{to}, 84r: “Wol nicht slapen kan de barne hasen leueren tho puluer de nutte to etende offt drinckende: wen he wedder vp waken scal so bestrik eme den munth myt etik” (If one cannot sleep, one should burn the liver of a hare to powder, this helps when eaten or drunk. When one wakes up again, one should spread the mouth with vinegar).

⁷⁹ Copenhagen, GKS 1663 4^{to}, 71r.

medical sources, such as the *Düdesche Arstedie*,⁸⁰ the *Abdinghofer Arzneibuch*,⁸¹ the *Utrechter Arzneibuch*,⁸² the *Arzneibuch Albrechts von Borgunnien*,⁸³ and the *Stockholmer mittelniederdeutsches Arzneibuch*.⁸⁴ Some of these, as, for example,

80 Norrbom, *Das Gothaer mittelniederdeutsche Arzneibuch*, (see note 52), 152: “Weme de vothe vthvallen vnde synt vorvraren, de thee ersten den vrost vth vnde brade denne queden vnde legge de darvp so he dat hetest doghen mach, edder he bynde dat poyvis vp” (If one’s feet are about to fall off because they are frozen, first take away the frost, then burn a quince and lay it on the feet, as hot as one can bear it, or bind puffball onto them).

81 Mareike Temmen, *Das ‘Abdinghofer Arzneibuch’. Edition und Untersuchung einer Handschrift mittelniederdeutscher Fachprosa* (Cologne, Weimar, and Vienna: Böhlau, 2006), 344: “Welkeme mynschen syne vote neden vt vallet, de sal queden snyden to pennynigen vnde braden de vnde leggen de vp den voet, dat he het werde vnde scal se leggen vp de vote also he dat hetest doen mach, so helet de vote.” (When someone’s foot falls off, he should cut a quince into small pieces and burn it before placing it onto the foot, as hot as he can bear it. This will heal the foot). On the medical collection from the fifteenth century, see also Mareike Temmen and Gundolf Keil, “*Abdinghofer Arzneibuch*,” *Die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters. Verfasserlexikon*. Vol. 11: *Nachträge und Korrekturen*, ed. Burghart Wachinger, Gundolf Keil, Kurt Ruh (†), Werner Schröder, and Franz Josef Worstbrock (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2004), 1–2.

82 Agi Lindgren, *Das Utrechter Arzneibuch* (Ms. 1355, 16°, *Bibliotheek der Rijksuniversiteit Utrecht*). Acta universitatis stockholmiensis. Stockholmer germanistische Forschungen, 21 (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1976), 55: “So weme de vote vtvallet an stucken. So we likeme minschen deme sine vote vnder al utvallet van stucken, de scal nemen queden vnde scal an klenen pennighen sniden vnde maken dat het vppe deme vure vnde legget denne uppe dat sere, so du in hetest doghen moghest; dat do also wente eme it al hel werde.” (If one’s foot falls off in pieces. When one’s foot falls off in pieces, he should take quince and cut it into small pieces, heat them on the fire and place them on the wound, as hot as you can bear it. Do that until the foot is healed). On this medical collection from the end of the fifteenth century, see also Agi Lindgren (†), Gundolf Keil, “*Utrechter Arzneibuch*,” *Die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters. Verfasserlexikon*. Vol. 10: *Ulrich von Lilienfeld – >Das zwölfjährige Mönchlein<*, ed. Burghart Wachinger, Gundolf Keil, Kurt Ruh, Werner Schröder, and Franz Josef Worstbrock (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1999), 145–48.

83 W. L. Wardale, *Albrecht van Borgunnien’s Treatise on Medicine* (Sloane Ms. 3002, *British Museum*). St. Andrews University Publication, XXXVIII (London, Edinburgh, Glasgow, et al.: Humphrey Milford Oxford University Press, 1936), 52: “Weme de vote van vroste vtuallen. De thee ersten den frost vth vnde brade denne queden vnd legge dar vp so he dat heteste lyden mach” (If one’s foot falls off because of frost, first take away the frost, then burn a quince and lay it on the foot, as hot as he can bear it). On this early fifteenth-century medical text, see also Gundolf Keil, “*Albrecht van Borgunnien*,” *Die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters. Verfasserlexikon*. Vol. 1: >*A solis ortus cardine* – *Colmarer Dominikanerchronist*, ed. Kurt Ruh, Gundolf Keil, Werner Schröder, Burghart Wachinger, and Franz Josef Worstbrock (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1978), 179–80.

84 Lindgren, *Ein Stockholmer mittelniederdeutsches Arzneibuch*, (see note 48), 162: “So weme de vote nedden vtvallet an stucken, de neme queden vnde snide de an klenen stucken vnd make de heit vnde lege se up dat seer” (When one’s feet fall off in pieces, one should take a quince

the *Düdesche Arstedie*, ascribe this pathological condition (foot falling off) to the frost, whereas the Copenhagen manuscript does not mention its possible cause. Other peculiarities of the Copenhagen section include the indication to slice thinly the quince before putting it on the fire (*Vnd snyde de to klenen schyuen*) and the statement on the effectiveness of the remedy (*So helet dat to hant*).

On a lighter theme, two lines deal with a hygienic rather than a medical problem, namely, smelly feet:

wan de vote stincken: sede ... in etik vnde wassche
de vot dar mede⁸⁵

[If one's feet stink, simmer ... in vinegar and wash the foot with that.]

This short piece of advice suggesting to wash smelly feet with vinegar, in which some unknown ingredient had already been soaked is not the only purely hygienic passage added to the *Feldtbuch der Wundarzney* in Copenhagen, GKS 1663 4^{to}.

Other indications of this type deal with another socially impairing condition: halitosis, quite frequently mentioned in Low German medical sources.⁸⁶ On fol.

and cut it into small pieces, make them hot and lay it onto the wound). On this medical collection, see also Agi Lindgren (†), Gundolf Keil, “Stockholmer Arzneibuch,” *Die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters. Verfasserlexikon*. Vol. 9: *Slecht, Reinbold – Ulrich von Liechtenstein*, ed. Burghart Wachinger, Gundolf Keil, Kurt Ruh, Werner Schröder, and Franz Josef Worstbrock (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1995), 344–46.

⁸⁵ Copenhagen, GKS 1663 4^{to}, 71r.

⁸⁶ Compare, for example, Lindgren, *Das Utrecht Arzneibuch* (see note 82), 67: “Weder den stinkende adhmen. So deme minschen de munt stincket. Is he iunc, so neme he enen dranc des someres. Is he olt, so neme he ene des winteres. Kumt he nicht van den tenen, so is de minsche all ersvoren; ene dorstet sere, so sint eme de lippen dunne. Du scolt nemen mersvam vnde scolt den sere seden an deme watere vnde bede eme den buc darmede vnde mit heteme brode, want sic de buch erledeghet. So nim denne hauermele vnde sud dat in deme sape der weghebrede; dat scal he vaste nutteghen des morgenens vro seuen daghe, so wert eme bat” (Against stinking breath. When one's mouth stinks: if he is young, he should take a summer drink; if he is old, he should take a winter one. If bad breath is not due to the teeth, the man is completely septic; if one is very thirsty, his lips are very thin. You should take *alcyonium* and cook it for a long time in water and make a warm compress with it to put onto the abdomen together with hot bread, in order to empty the intestines. Then take oat flour and dissolve it into plaintain juice. He should take it on an empty stomach every morning early for seven days and he will be better.); Wardale, *Albrecht van Borgunnien's Treatise* (see note 83), 20: “Wedder quade røke des mundes. Dat kumpt bewilen to van dem magen. Nym mynte vnde sede de in wine, so lange bet de helffte van deme wine vorsoden is, so drink dat” (Against bad smell in the mouth. Sometimes it is caused by the stomach. Take mint and cook it in wine until the wine is reduced to half its volume. Then drink it); Alstermark, *Das Arzneibuch* (see note 68), 107: “Wem de adem styncket. Wem der adem

76r we find, for example, a paragraph entitled *Wedder den vulen adem* (Against bad breath), suggesting to prepare a drink by burning to powder half a handful of corn and then pouring wine on it. This preparation has to be drunk every morning and evening for five days, in order to cure halitosis:

Wedder den vulen adem. Nym j hant vul kornen. de do
in enen reynen pot. vnd berne de to puluer, vnd sedet
den myt win vppe de helffte, dar van drinck auenth vnde
morgen, viff dage lanck, So vor geit de stanck deß
mundeß.⁸⁷

[Against bad breath. Take half a handful of grain. Put it in a clean pot and burn it to powder. Then pour wine into the pot, so that it covers more than half of the powder. Drink this concoction every evening and every morning for five days. In this way, bad breath disappears.]

Though not explicitly mentioned, bad breath could be the therapeutic indication of a prescription explaining how to prepare a mouthwash (*munth water*), using oak bark (*eken borken*), *Pyrola* (*winter gron*), roots of elecampane (*alandeß worteln*), pellitory (*bertram*), burnt alum (*branden allun*) and honey (*honnig*):

Munth water. Nym eken borken, winter gron,
alandeß worteln: bertram, branden allun. vnd ij lepel
vul honnigeß do dar in etc.⁸⁸

[Mouthwash. Take oak bark, *Pyrola*, roots of elecampane, pellitory, burnt alum and two spoons full of honey. Put ... into it, etc.]

7 Conclusion

Clearly, indications as the last ones described are not connected with a field surgery manual proper. Hans von Gersdorff's *Feldtbuch der Wundarzney* and its incorporation into the Copenhagen manuscript containing a fragment of its Low German translation can be understood only if we evaluate the manuscript as a

styncket. Sonym gallen vnd wirauch, jslis j lot. Darto male jngwar vnd sut it jn ettyge vnd halt dat jn dem munde, als du lengest kanst. So spyge et vit vnd do et nach eyns eder ij, do kummet de stanck vit" (If one has bad breath. If one has bad breath, take gall and incense, half a part of each. Add ground ginger and cook it in vinegar. Then take it in the mouth as long as you can. Spit it out and repeat the procedure once or twice more. In this way the bad smell goes away).

⁸⁷ Copenhagen, GKS 1663 4^{to}, 76r.

⁸⁸ Copenhagen, GKS 1663 4^{to}, 74v.

whole, recognizing it as a commonplace book, in which an expert in the field recorded a series of medical and surgical notions, techniques and prescriptions, derived from various sources, which he considered potentially useful. In this respect, the Low German version of the *Feldtbuch* appears to be the work of a person who was not only competent, well-read, and having anatomical knowledge, but who demonstrated a critical attitude to his sources⁸⁹ and who was also probably more accustomed to dealing with everyday wounds and traumata, rather than with wounds that had been the result of military activities.

This attitude is reflected in both the fragment of Hans von Gersdorff's manual and the additions to the *Velt bock*. As the above-listed titles of the chapters from the *Feldtbuch* included into the Copenhagen manuscript clearly show, in fact, specifically field-surgical topics such as amputations had not been translated into Low German. These parts of the Early High German field surgery manual must have appeared scarcely useful to the author of Copenhagen, GKS 1663 4^{to}, who, consequently, neither considered them worthy of recording nor transcribing them in his personal scrapbook.

Similarly, the analysis of the insertions into and additions to the *Velt bock* has highlighted the compiler's strong interest in learning and remembering new remedies and techniques, which could be employed both in the treatment of surgical pathologies, such as, for example, wounds, cancer, fistulas and their possible complications (e.g., swollen wounds⁹⁰), and other, non-surgical, conditions (e.g., articular pain, syphilis, nosebleed, pediatric indigestion, haematochezia). For this reason, it is reasonable to conjecture that this specific interest can be ascribed to the Low German author's personal experience and to the pathologies that he was accustomed to treating. Judging from the content of the additions to the *Velt bock*, we may assume that the anonymous compiler of Copenhagen, GKS 1663 4^{to} was consulted not only for wounds and traumata, but also for ophthalmological disorders and other medical conditions not requiring proper surgical procedures. The purely hygienic passages about smelly feet and bad breath

⁸⁹ On this, see Benati, "The Manuscript" (see note 28), 301–24.

⁹⁰ Copenhagen, GKS 1663 4^{to}, 82r: "**Item** wor en wunde swelleth van vnnerliken dingen also dat dar etter vth keme So make se alsus reyne, Nym vj lot rosen hornich, ij lot gersten mel, vnde make dat to samende vp deme vure warm. vnd dar vp gelecht, vnd ene wile dar na, So nym hars iiiij lot, ij lot waß, scapen tallich ij lot vnd ij lot terpentin. vnd do also to vorn, her mach man alle wunden mede neszen wen se reyniget sinth" (Similarly, when a wound is swollen because of internal things, so that pus comes out of it, clean it in this way: take six parts honey, two parts barley flour, mix them on the fire and lay the preparation onto the wound. After a while, take four parts resin, two parts wax, one and a half parts sheep tallow and one and a half parts turpentine. Then do as before. In this way, one can heal every wound, once it is clean).

may be understood as being motivated by its compiler's wish to have solutions for these unpleasant conditions to meet patient demands and, possibly, his own needs (e.g., washing smelly feet before treating them for a wound or a trauma).

This investigation of the additions to the *Velt bock* in the first part of Copenhagen, GKS 1663 4^{to} (fol. 1–86) has confirmed that the manuscript, in its original form, including the now lost *Herbarius* and *Ci(r)urgia*, is the lifetime work by a medically and surgically competent person, who documented useful pieces of information, gleaned from a spectrum of sources. In this respect, the ultimate criterion for his selection of topics in the medical scrapbook seems to be their relevance for his professional needs and for the treatment of the pathologies he anticipated he could be called upon to deal with. In this respect, the incorporation of purely hygienic indications suggests that, at the time the author of the medical scrapbook preserved in Copenhagen, GKS 1663 4^{to} was active, 'minor' hygienic issues such as bad breath or smelly feet were far from being accepted and tolerated, but were considered as unpleasant as they are today. The very fact that people consulted (and probably payed) a surgeon to cure any of these problems clearly indicates that they were not so 'dirty' as they are usually depicted⁹¹ and that personal hygiene already played an important role in the early modern society.

⁹¹ On the erroneous but common conception of the 'dirty' Middle Ages and Early Modern Times, see the contribution to this volume by Albrecht Classen.

Thomas G. Benedek

The Role of Therapeutic Bathing in the Sixteenth Century and Its Contemporary Scientific Explanations

Introduction

Ambivalence about bathing is quite ancient. It was already acknowledged by St. Augustine, Bishop of Hippo (354–430). According to his *Rules*:

Because bathing may be necessary for good health, the opportunity to visit the public baths may never be refused. In this matter follow medical advice without grumbling. Even if a person is unwilling, he shall do what has to be done for the good of his health, if necessary at the command of his superior. But if someone wants to go bathing just because he enjoys it when it is not really necessary he will have to learn to renounce his desires. For what a person likes may not be good for him. It may even be harmful.¹

As early as 1310 Pietro d' Abano (ca. 1250–ca. 1315), professor of medicine in Padua, indicated in his *Conciliator differentiarum*² the existence of various types of bathing possibilities. These included the sweat-bath, shower, tub with and without the addition of herbs, and the 'natural' spring fed bath.³ The various practices gradually spread northward from Italy during the next three centuries. In the sixteenth century European bathing was usually divided between private tubs filled with water from whatever sources were available and 'natural baths,' for which the water source erupts spontaneously from the ground.

¹ Angela Montford, *Health, Sickness, Medicine and the Friars in the 13th and 14th Centuries* (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2004), 240.

² Horace M. Brown, "De Venenis of Petrus Abbonus, edition of MCDXCIII," *Annals of Medical History* 6 (1924): 23–53.

³ Frank Fürbeth, "Zur Bedeutung des Badewesens im Mittelalter und der frühen Neuzeit," *Paracelsus und Salzburg*, ed Heinz Dopsch and Peter F. Kramml. Mitteilungen der Gesellschaft für Salzburger Landeskunde, Ergänzungs-Band, 14 (Salzburg: Gesellschaft für Salzburger Landeskunde, 1994), 463–97. See also the contributions to this volume by Debra L. Stoudt and David Tomíček.

Thomas G. Benedek, University of Pittsburgh

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What Were the Scientific Questions?

The easiest explanation of any phenomenon has always been that its occurrence is supernatural and that it has been willed by God or some particular gods. For example, in 1535 Paracelsus stated (*Von dess Bad Pfeffers*): “It should be understood that the power of God should be considered before all natural interpretations, and as God’s hand engages to that extent will it be accomplished. Medicine once again proves that God is more than Nature.”⁴ In *Volumen Paramirum* (ca. 1525) Paracelsus specifies the duty of the physician in relation to “science,” albeit contradicting his own actual practices:

The physician must pursue the disease like a cow the trough. Thereby he demonstrates that he is pursuing Nature and is not speculating. Nature is visible while speculation is invisible. The physician deals with the visible; no one deals with the invisible. The visible yields truth, the invisible nothing ...⁵

Attempts to explain the cause and effect of directly observed natural phenomena in other than spiritual ways constituted “science.” This comes into consideration particularly when the observation deviates from the expected. Water was philosophically assigned the quality of being “cold.” Thus, the discovery of springs of warm or even hot water required an explanation for the heat if one was unwilling to consider it “the will of God.” Once spontaneously hot water was acknowledged to be extraordinary it could more easily have extraordinary effects, either desirable or detrimental. Furthermore, does water that falls as rain have different qualities from water that is on the surface of the earth or water that comes from underground? According to Hippocrates, “Rainwater is the healthiest of all waters because it is light and sweet and is easily cooked in the stomach.”⁶ The optimal condition of water continued to be discussed in the sixteenth century (*vide infra*), and, with modifications, into the present time.

Various writings by Galen (129–ca. 215) continued to form the basis of medical thought in the sixteenth century. Therefore, several of his concepts need to be presented first. Health was predicated to be governed by the balance of four “cardinal humors,” each of which was generated in its particular organ: phlegm

⁴ Paracelsus, *Bücher und Schriften*, ed. Johannes Huser. Reprint of the 1589–1590 edition in 6 volumes (New York: Georg Olms, 1972). *Von dess Bad Pfeffers in Obern Schweitz gelegen*, ed. Huser, vol. 3, 327–43; here 335.

⁵ Paracelsus, *Paramirum*, prologue to *Bücher und Schriften*, ed. Huser, vol. I (see note 4), 7–11.

⁶ Hippocrates, *Airs, Waters and Places*, 156–183 in *The Genuine Works of Hippocrates*, trans. Francis Adams (New York: William Wood & Co., 1886), ch. 8, 163.

in the brain, blood in the heart, yellow bile in the gallbladder, and black bile in the spleen. Each cardinal humor furthermore was differentiated by a cascade of intrinsic heat, with blood being the hottest, followed by yellow bile, then black bile, and phlegm the coldest. According to Galen: “There are pure, unadulterated qualities – heat, coldness, dryness and moisture. The quality should be thought of as having its own peculiar nature, separate from the body that receives it.”⁷ This misconception continued to impair the interpretation of observations into the Renaissance.

A pair of opposing qualities soon became assigned to each humor: hot or cold, moist or dry. In this Galen extrapolated from Aristotle. In his early work, *Mixtures I*, Galen pointed out that these four qualities should not be considered as absolutes, but make sense only as degrees of deviation from an ideal mean at which they are perfectly balanced. Humors could become imbalanced in numerous ways and infinite degrees, resulting in *dyscrasia*.⁸ All non-traumatic abnormalities, whether congenital or acquired, could be explained by dyscrasia, while trauma was self-evident:

Cold diseases result from phlegm, and warmer ones from yellow bile. There is not a single thing to be found which does not bear witness to the truth of this account. How could it be otherwise?⁹

Such second-century self-assurance continued to inhibit the understanding of human biology in the sixteenth century and far beyond. Since it is difficult to consider physical properties of ephemeral phenomena, humors were conceived of as fluids. One and a half millennia before the advent of the concept of iatro-mechanics,¹⁰ dyscrasias were analogized to physical phenomena: If a humor or mixture of humors becomes too cold, it thickens, its flow slows, and it obstructs vital passages within or between viscera. If a humor or mixture becomes too warm, it becomes more dilute and its movement becomes abnormally rapid so that it reaches sites where it should not be, or pools in excessive quantity. The internal organs, the actual functions of which were totally unknown, could be cooled or heated by exposure to an abnormal temperature: from within by consuming an

⁷ Galen, *Selected Works*, trans. Peter N. Singer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997). *Mixtures*, Book I, ch. 6, 221.

⁸ Galen, *On the Natural Faculties*, trans. Arthur J. Brock (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), ch. 7–8, 222–23.

⁹ Galen, *On the Natural* (see note 8), II:viii, 185.

¹⁰ Thomas S. Hall, “Descartes Physiological Methods. Position, Principles, Examples,” *Journal of the History of Biology* 3 (1970): 53–79.

unusually hot or cold drink or food, and externally, by exposure to abnormal air temperature or, more efficiently, by bathing in cold or uncomfortably hot water.

There was as yet no term for the concept of energy, which, most broadly defined, is the capacity to produce an effect. In biology this was first demonstrated in the 1880s.¹¹ However, the need for conservation of heat, a manifestation of energy, was a guiding principle, while the existence of internal mechanisms to conserve heat were not speculated about. Consequently, there were many assumptions about how heat is lost and how this loss could be combated. Heating the body to treat a “hot disease” would seem illogical by itself. Hence the importance of the therapeutic alternative – the solute content of the water that was bathed in or consumed. Sulfurous water was known in the Middle Ages by its taste and odor; and the presence of salt from ocean water long before that. So, as long as there were no methods to prove their presence, any effect of a thermal bath on a bather could be explained by solutes that were anticipated to be in the water.

Whether potency should also be attributed to a combination of solutes was entertained by few authors. The importance of solutes was recognized in the fourteenth century, as demonstrated by various efforts to test for them.¹² However, because results of such efforts were generally deemed unreliable, taste continued to be the criterion mostly relied on. In the late sixteenth century, this led to the renewal of Galen’s speculation about how taste is perceived. However, no consideration appears to have been given to the actual temperature of thermal baths. The simple explanation for this is that no practical device to measure temperature existed before the eighteenth century. Nevertheless, some clinical criteria were defined, such as that one should not remain in the bath beyond the onset of reddening or wrinkling of the skin.

High to Late Middle Ages

After the decline of imperial Rome, public bathing lost favor. It was deemed noteworthy that the Carolingian Emperor Louis I (778–840) bathed every Saturday.¹³ Of course, this does not mean that all practices of hygiene had been lost, but the

¹¹ Galen, *Selected Works: Mixtures* (see note 7), Book I:9, 230.

¹² Anonymous, “Max Rubner (1854–1932), Energy Physiologist,” *Journal of the American Medical Association* 194 (1965): 198–99.

¹³ Lynn Thorndike, *A History of Magic and Experimental Science* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1923), vol. III, ch. xxiv, 386–97: “John de Dondis and Scientific Measurement.”

historical sources do not convey much information, here excepting the rich range of literary texts dealing with courtly matter, as Albrecht Classen and Rosa A. Perez discuss in their contributions to this volume. Bathing became re-popularized only in the thirteenth century at Italian thermal springs.¹⁴ The little evidence available suggests that these sites were at first used predominantly as social centers, rather than as places to be cured. A letter written in 1416 about a visit two years earlier to Baden in Aargau (northern Switzerland) by Gian Poggio Bracciolini (1380–1459), then secretary to Pope John XXIII, stated incidentally that he visited the bath for treatment of his *contulisseum iuncture manus* (literally stubborn wrist, but perhaps arthritic hand).¹⁵ However, this long letter was devoted to observations about these baths and their use as a site for entertainment. There were separate entrances for men and women, but bathers could move freely from one bath to another, without keeping the sexes apart. Because of complaints that monks were participating in the frivolities, the Council of Basel (1431–1434) specifically forbade Benedictines from attending the bath unless they had obtained a medical waver from their superior.¹⁶

Poggio's life overlapped with that of a German salt merchant. In February 1474, Hans von Waltheym (ca. 1422–1479) undertook a thirteen-month pilgrimage from his home in Halle (Thuringia) to the Provence, during which he kept a detailed diary. This is what made him noteworthy.¹⁷ In July, during the return segment of this arduous trip, he spent three weeks in Baden. However, he did not indulge in the public baths that Poggio had described, but bathed in the private accommodations of the local aristocracy with whom he was socializing. Medically, the baths then were reputed to benefit particularly ailments of the elderly.¹⁸

¹⁴ Georg Zappert, “Über das Badewesen mittelalterlicher und späterer Zeit,” *Archiv für Kunde österreichischer Geschichts-Quellen* 21 (1859): 3–166; here 17.

¹⁵ Richard Palmer (1990): “In this our lightye and learned tyme’: Italian Baths in the Era of the Renaissance,” *The Medical History of Water and Spas*, ed. Roy Porter (London: Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine, 1990), 14–22.

¹⁶ *Poggio Bracciolini Lettere*, ed. Helene Harth (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 1984), I:128–35, dated 18 May, 1416. See p. 128.

¹⁷ Alfred Martin, *Deutsches Badewesen in vergangenen Tagen; nebst einem Beitrag zur Geschichte der Deutschen Wasserheilkunde* (Jena: Diederichs, 1906), 239–45. See also the Introduction to this volume by Albrecht Classen.

¹⁸ Dietrich Duschenbrett, “Hans von Waltheym,” *Die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters: Verfasserlexikon*, 2nd. exp. and rev. ed. Kurt Ruh et al. (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1981), Vol. 3, col. 460–63; see now Albrecht Classen, “A Slow Paradigm Shift: Late Fifteenth-Century Travel Literature and the Perception of the World: The Case of Hans von Waltheym (ca. 1422–1479),” *Medievalia et Humanistica* 42 (2017): 1–21.

According to Walther Ryff (1549), “The healthy ancients squandered their health, rather than extending it into a calm, fragrant old age. Such practice continues today among the wealthy, the greater part of whom go to the bath more for carnal debauchery than for the needs of bodily diseases and injuries.”¹⁹

Potential hazards of baths were being considered even earlier. Thus, the Bavarian Konrad von Megenberg (ca. 1309–1374), the composer of the first German encyclopedia of natural history, commented in ca 1350:

Hot baths, that one calls *Wildbad*, smell of sulfur because these waters flow through burning, sulfurous earth from which the water becomes hot and malodorous ... It is foolhardy for a traveler to use various unknown waters because some cause goiters. The evidence for this is that there are many goiterous people in the vicinity of these springs ... Water that contains copper is more injurious than water that contains lead.²⁰

Georgius Agricola (1494–1555), who held a medical degree from Ferrara, stated that, in the region of the Swiss-Austrian border, “There is a spring from which water when consumed affects the brain so deleteriously that it makes people stupid (causes cretinism), and also in Italy drinking water is responsible for goiter formation.”²¹ These symptoms, although correctly observed, were actually caused by a dietary lack of iodine. Iodine was discovered in 1811, and hence the lack of this element in the diet as the cause of goiters and mental deficiency became recognized in mid-nineteenth century.

Was curiosity about the mineral content of water stimulated by ideas that spring water has therapeutic properties, or was belief that water that erupts from the earth to have healing properties the stimulus to determine its content? The belief that spring water contains minerals was supported by the Hippocratic assertion of the presence of eight minerals in spring water. However, none were then considered in relation to a possible therapeutic value.²² A millennium later, Paul of Aegina (seventh century) reminded physicians: “It is necessary to be

19 Walther Hermannus Ryff, *Newe heilsame unnd nutzliche Baden Fart. Eigentlicher Unterscheidung mancherlei Art unnd Manier der Badt ...* (Würzburg: Johan Myller, 1549), 5 (New therapeutic and useful bathing journeys. Practical differentiation of various kinds and styles of the baths).

20 Robert Luff, Georg Steer, *Konrad von Megenberg. Das “Buch der Natur”*. *Kritischer Text nach den Handschriften* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 2003), Book II “On Water,” 126–30; here 128.

21 Georgius Agricola, *Epistula ad Meurerum de ortu et causis subterraneorum libri V, de natura eorum quae effluunt ex terra libri IV: Schriften zur Geologie und Mineralogie*, trans. and ed. Georg Fraustadt, vol. I. *Ausgewählte Werke*, 3 (Berlin: Deutscher Verlag der Wissenschaften, 1956), *De natura eorum, quae effluuent ex terra*, 1545 (The Nature of the things that flow from the earth), 226–329. See Book II, 252–53.

22 Hippocrates (see note 6), Ch. 7, 162.

skilled in the good and bad properties of waters, for of all things water is of the most use in every mode of regimen." Furthermore, "... it is necessary to know that the best water is wholly devoid of quality, as regards taste and smell ..."²³ Paul endorsed the presence of six of the Hippocratic solutes, but did not claim to have found silver or gold. He added salt and considered the therapeutic utility or hazard of each substance. Avicenna (980–1037), certainly with more access to different baths in Persia than Paul in the vicinity of Greece, claimed the presence of the same minerals (no. 408).²⁴

Whether Giacomo Dondi (1298–1359), professor of medicine in Padua, had influences other than his own curiosity to examine the water at the spring of Abano (near Padua) is unknown. In the essay *Liber aggregationis sive Aggregator Paduanus de medicinis simplicibus* he described that by evaporation it could be shown to contain sulfur and alum (printed 1514). His better known son, Giovanni Dondi (1318–1389), a physician to the Holy Roman Emperor among other distinctions, was unable, apparently by theory rather than experiment, to confirm this. According to his assessment of the Abano water he "asserts that it has often been tested by experience that water from these hot springs will not boil any sooner over a fire than an equal amount of cold water from another source in the same kind of vessel" (p. 395):

It is naturally moist, but warm only like other heated waters. However, its effectiveness which results from its mineral content, is strongly drying, as much from salt as from lime. However, it is warm because it contains more of the heat of salt than of cold of lime. Based on reason, it does not contain the characteristic of sulfur.²⁵

Giovanni also attempted to answer the question whether water from a hot spring, such as Abano, is inherently different from cold water from another source. He found that equal volumes of water from the two sources placed in the same kind of vessels over the same flame will boil at the same time. Therefore, any effects must be due to the contents of water, rather than inherent differences in the waters. The concept of this experiment must be one of the oldest ever recorded.

²³ Oskar C. Gruner, *A Treatise on The Canon of Medicine of Avicenna* (New York: A. M. Kelley, 1970), no. 408, 237–38.

²⁴ Lynn Thorndike, *A History of Magic and Experimental Science* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1923), Vol. III, 386–97, "John de Dondis and Scientific Measurement."

²⁵ Lynn Thorndike, *A History of Magic and Experimental Science* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1941), Vol. V, ch. xix, 430–44: "German Medicine."

Religious and Physiologic Bases for Therapeutic Bathing

Chronologically, the first major survey of therapeutic bathing was in the form of a poem composed in about 1480 by Hans Folz (ca. 1440–1513), a Meistersinger and barber in Nuremberg.²⁶ There he preceded by a generation the better known Meistersinger, Hans Sachs (1494–1576) who wrote satirically about baths, as for example *The Lady at the Natural Bath* (1558).²⁷ (Text in addendum) According to the title of Folz's bathing verses, *Bäderbüchlein* (Bathing Booklet, ca. 1480), they are limited to describing the uses of naturally hot spring-fed baths. He cites mythical baths from Homer to Ovid and contemporary baths from a much wider area than other authors: Italy, southern France, northern Spain, Hungary, Western Turkey, besides German and Austrian territories. Folz recommends resorting to the bath only when medicines are not available. He emphasizes the importance of the doctor-patient relationship and the enmity between doctors and bath proprietors, whom they consider their economic competitors.

Thomas Murner (ca. 1475–1537) was an Alsatian monk and author. In 1514 he wrote an allegory called *Geistliche Badenfahrt* (Spiritual Bathing Journey) that outlined the procedures of bathing step by step, beginning with obtaining the water and ending with resting after the bath, finally thanking the proprietor. Leprosy, like original sin, is incurable; bathing, by implication, is required to wash away at least one's ordinary sins. Consequently, whether bathing is necessary depends on the judgment of an individual's behavior²⁸:

Those who have not committed great sins
 Do not require a daily bath,
 But only a little shower,
 Not immersing their whole body.²⁹

²⁶ Hans Folz, *Die Reimpaarsprüche*, ed. Hanns Fischer. Münchener Texte und Untersuchungen zur deutschen Literatur des Mittelalters, 1 (Munich: C. H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1961), no. 43. *Bäderbüchlein*, 388–411.

²⁷ Hans Sachs, *Sämtliche Fabeln und Schwänke*, ed. Edmund Goetze and Karl Drescher, vol. 6 (Halle a. d. S.: Max Niemeyer, 1913): “Die puergerin im wiltpad,” 283–84.

²⁸ Thomas Murner, *Badenfahrt*, ed. Victor Michels. Kritische Gesamtausgaben elsässischer Schriftsteller des Mittelalters und der Reformationszeit (1549; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1927), 129. Murner also coined the famous statement ‘not to throw the baby out with the bathwater’; see the comments by Albrecht Classen in his contribution to this volume.

²⁹ Murner, *Badenfahrt* (see note 28), 31:15–18. Trans. is mine.

Bathing in the Early Modern Period

Some early essays on therapeutic bathing, such as the Dondi's essays on Abano in the fourteenth century, focused on one facility, essentially being advertisements for a particular bath. However, most authors cited at least a dozen sites, more or less comparatively. Thus Jones (*vide infra*) in 1572 was rather unusual, writing almost exclusively about Bath and Buxton.

In about 1530 Caspar Schober, an otherwise obscure Austrian physician, wrote the following introduction to his "Essay on German Baths":

The thermal baths can be identified by the minerals which are the source of their strength and actions. The minerals of thermal springs are identified either by experiment or reason. Experimental results are achieved from the mineral residue that appears either by sedimentation, evaporation, or the distillation column, or evaporation of water in the sun, which is preferable to the former and more reliable. Reasoning is achieved from the teachings of the nobles [of medicine] about minerals, namely taste, color, odor and effects of the water.³⁰

The introduction of distillation methods in the fourteenth century became a bridge from alchemy to chemistry.³¹ Distillation not only achieved the result of evaporation more rapidly, but also offered the possibility of separating substances that were contained in the fluid being tested. Water was evaporated in the apparatus by heating and, as the vapor re-condensed in tubing connected to the heating vessel, substances could be separated, depending on their specific condensation temperature.³² The procedure as described by Ryff in 1544 was still crude but definitely a major step forward in scientific research methods:

Place a fairly large volume of the water (to be analyzed) into a glass flask and securely fasten the cap onto it. Then partition on an appropriate oven over a low coal fire. The four elements will be separated in such a distillation: the three lightest, namely fire, air and water are driven out, while the coarsest earthy substance remains at the bottom. Hence earthy mixtures of other elements do not leave the fire until they are entirely dried. Then these earthy substances are spread on a board ...³³

³⁰ Frank Fürbeth, "Der 'Tractatus de balneis Germaniae'des Caspar Schober (um 1530)," *Sudhoff's Archiv für Geschichte der Medizin* 80 (1996): 150–66.

³¹ Robert Multhauf, "The Significance of Distillation in Renaissance Medical Chemistry," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 30 (1956): 329–46.

³² Allen G. Debus, "Solution Analysis Prior to Robert Boyle," *Chymia* 8 (1962): 41–61.

³³ Walther H. Ryff, *Spiegel, unnd Regiment der Gesundtheyt...* (Frankfurt a. M.: Christian Egenolff, 1555), see 118r.

Further separation is by the appearance of crystals and/or the generation of odor or color by additional heating.

Schober's allusion to color could refer to the confirmatory test for sulfur described by Michele Savonarola.³⁴ He found in about 1440 that throwing sulfurous residue from evaporation onto a fire generates a green flame and a characteristic odor. His essay "All of the Baths and Hot Springs of Italy," also provided a brief explanation of the hazards of humoral therapeutics:

The bath by its strong heating properties warms, thins, liquifies, and makes to flow the humors, and so puts them in a state of flux. Wherefore they often run so to different parts of the body that unexpected diseases are engendered thereby, as I have seen in my time. From which one infers that resort is not to be had to baths except for a very urgent reason, whence the common school [of doctors] in treating severe illnesses counsels baths only after all medicaments have been tried.³⁵

The first essay on baths by a non-Italian writer was composed by Felix Hemmerli (1388–1459) a jurist and theologian in Zurich. Hemmerli had studied in Bologna where, presumably, he became acquainted with some of the Italian writings and the popularity of spring-fed baths. He composed his *Tractatus de balneis naturalibus* in about 1450. It was translated into German about twenty years later as the *Buch von allen warmen Bädern* (Book about all warm baths).³⁶ Although Hemmerli focused on the same Swiss bath about which Poggio and Hans von Waltheym had commented, he also cited nine other baths located in Germany, Switzerland, Austria, and Hungary. His encompassing message was that the very existence of warm springs demonstrated God's grace. Therefore, contrary to the actual practice, bathers are warned to use these baths only therapeutically, as God had intended.

Pores

The concept of cutaneous pores was engrained in naturalistic thought long before their existence was demonstrated. The relevance of this to the pseudo-science of

³⁴ Walther H. Ryff, *Spiegel, unnd Regiment der Gesundtheyt* (see note 32), 118r.

³⁵ Karl Sudhoff, "Brunnenregeln für Kurgäste einer italienischen Heilquelle aus der Mitte des 15. Jahrhunderts," *Archiv für Geschichte der Medizin* 21 (1929): 88–94.

³⁶ Frank Fürbeth, "Ein Moralist als Wilderer: Felix Hemmerlis 'tractatus de balneis naturalibus' (um 1450) und seine Rezeption in Deutschland," *Sudhoff's Archiv für Geschichte der Medizin* 77 (1993): 97–113.

therapeutic bathing is that it facilitated the explanation that externally applied heat penetrates deeply to affect the humors, which then would affect the viscera, for better or worse. Clearly, most diseases were recognized to involve some sort of dysfunction of internal organs. While dietetic treatments were construed to act more directly, most other therapy was assumed to be absorbed from external applications, such as poultices and baths.

Pores were postulated to exist as potential or consistent structures at least since the second century. Galen (*Mixtures II*) at one time conceived of cutaneous pores as potential openings through which waste products are squeezed out in response to sufficiently great internal pressure. His analogy went further, in that it explained the appearance of hair. Just as plants push out of the soil encouraged by the heat of the sun, hairs stimulated by internal heat push through the skin. Greater heat results in black hair, lesser heat in blond, etc.

In *Hygiene* (X) Galen implied contrariwise that pores are normally open, and that the extrusion of wastes is blocked either by their constriction or by thick excrements. Constriction also "is possible from both extreme cold and from aluminous (astringent) bathing."³⁷ *Mixtures (II)* also contains a lengthier explanation:

In all skin there is some transpiration, as the heat draws to itself a considerable amount of the moisture from within. But where the skin is wet ... these pathways of egress do not remain open, as the parts of them which are otherwise separated come together again. Where it (skin) is hard ... it is pierced by the force of the substances attempting to escape, but is unable to come together because of the dryness, so that the pores become more and more perforated under continual pressure from these substances in flux. Now, if the substance in question is either pure vapor or pure moisture, in the case of vapor the passage is swift and without hindrance, while moisture is frequently obstructed in the smaller pores, some of it even being forced to return inside the body ...³⁸

Galen seems to have considered absorption through pores only incidentally. "One and the same stoma subserves two distinct faculties and these exercise their pull at different times in opposite directions ..." ³⁹ (On the Natural Faculties III:13)

With the rise of the Renaissance the effects on *viscera* by the penetration of heat or cold was taken for granted, as well as for the extrusion of wastes, not only through the obvious gastro-intestinal and urinary pathways, but through the

³⁷ Robert M. Green, *A Translation of Galen's Hygiene (De Sanitate Tuenda)*. (Springfield, IL: C. C. Thomas, 1951), X, p. 131.

³⁸ Green, *A Translation of Galen's Hygiene (De Sanitate Tuenda)* (see note 37), II:X, 131–52.

³⁹ Galen, *On the Natural Faculties* (see note 8). Natural Faculties, III:13, 293.

skin. We find an expression of a part of this misconception in the book *On Contagion* by Hieronymous Fracastorius (1478–1553, Verona), published in 1546:

Bodies that are unclean and very moist and have pores of their flesh stopped up, are especially disposed to those contagions that develop within us originally; but bodies that have open and slack pores and are also hot and moist are disposed rather to those contagions that come to us from without.⁴⁰

Walther Ryff (1549) presents this view:

The same moisture that penetrates into the body through the secret passages of the sweat pores after the water has acquired external heat, then cools and moistens the body. From this moistening that you obtain, as well from cold as warm water, the inner warmth is constrained, somewhat reduced, and extinguished. The hidden passages of the cutaneous sweat pores are closed by exposure to cold water. Thereby the body is protected against all external injury from the surrounding air, and the internal warmth from the natural heat is attracted and unified, strengthened and increased. (11).

To Ryff the presence of bone, as protective of the brain, posed no obstacle for the penetration of heat in comparison to access to abdominal organs (13).

The bi-directional function of the skin was stated plainly by the Montpellier professor, Laurent Joubert (1529–1582) in 1579 in a plea for the use of clean clothes and bedding:

The passages of the skin must be kept open and clean by making sure that there are no obstacles in them ... Moreover, one must ensure that what comes in contact with the body, such as linens and all clothing, be very clean, so that the waste matter already transmitted through voiding will not be reabsorbed by the opening of the pores, which indiscriminately suck in everything that is presented to them. The pores have expelled these vile fumes through their contraction. If you allow the skin to keep this filth next to it, the pores will certainly reabsorb it, for they draw in air on all surfaces, whether it be good or bad, sweet or foul, pure or infected.⁴¹

The actual visualization of cutaneous pores was reported by Antoni van Leeuwenhoek (1632–1723) in 1717, having been accomplished with his “microscopes.”

40 Wilmer C. Wright, trans. *Hieronymi Fracastorii: On Contagion* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1930), Book I, ch. xii, 61.

41 Laurent Joubert, *Popular Errors*, trans. and annotated by Gregory D. de Rocher (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 1989), Quote 1:49.

⁴²This, however, did not settle the question of their persistence. For example, the distinguished Scottish anatomist William C. Cruickshank (1745–1800) in 1795 felt it necessary to acknowledge: “Lewenhoek imagined he saw these (cutaneous) scales by mean of the microscope ... Though I have not found pores in either cuticle or *rete mucosum*, I believe nevertheless, that they certainly exist.” He attributed their invisibility to the elasticity of the skin.”⁴³

Bathing in the Sixteenth Century

Only three kinds of information appear consistently in essays on thermal bathing: The location of the baths under consideration, the solute content of their water and rules of behavior for bathers. Contemporary scientific explanations for claims, conditions for which bathing is therapeutic, reasons to avoid bathing, focal washing, general dietetics, exercising, cited literature, and allusions to religious bases for bathing vary widely. There also is no consistency in the background of balneological authors.

Laurent Fries (d. 1531) was the town physician of Colmar (Alsace), as well as an astrologer.⁴⁴ In 1518 he published the first medical text in vernacular German (*Spigel der Artzny*, Strasbourg, Mirror of Medicine, 172 pages). Therein he expressed considerable ambivalence about bathing:

There is no greater misuse in our country than in bathing. The healthy bathe for no reason; some for fun; some women to become pregnant, such as at the Margrave's Bath where a priest impregnated many women; some to treat an illness, and for various irrelevant circumstances. Therefore there are many bad consequences that cannot be corrected. Much benefit may also accrue when the causes are appropriate.⁴⁵

Soon thereafter Fries wrote a text limited to bathing that was published posthumously in 1538.⁴⁶ He acknowledged that it was “a brief publication” (34 unnumbered pages), but claimed that it was the most comprehensive work on

⁴² Antoni van Leeuwenhoek (Delft: Adrianum Beman, 1719 Letter 43. 17 Sept. 1717. Quote on p. 409.

⁴³ William C. Cruickshank, *Experiments on the Insensible Perspiration of Human Body: Shewing its Affinity to Respiration*, 2nd ed. (1779; London: George Nicol, 1795), 1, 9.

⁴⁴ Lynn Thorndike, *A History of Magic and Experimental Science* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1941). Vol. V: 430–44; German Medicine.

⁴⁵ Fürbeth, “Ein Moralist als Wilderer” (see note 36), 97.

⁴⁶ Laurent Fries, *Ein hochnutzlicher Tractat Eygenschafft unnd Würckung der wunderbaren Natur aller Wildbeder so in teütschen Landen gelegen* (Straßburg: Bartholomeum Grieninger, 1538) (A

baths in German. He lauded Avicenna above Hippocrates and Galen, and provided accurate references to some ancient and medieval authors. He was satisfied with their opinions as factual. Whether Fries was unaware of Folz's poem or ignored it because its author was a mere barber is unknown. He favored the explanation for hot springs that was the second in Ryff's list of discredited explanations (*vide infra*). There are five ways to analyze water, of which taste is the most reliable.

Contrary to Agricola, who identified many causes for color in bodies of water, he has little confidence in color because this depends on concentration. Weight cannot differentiate between the presence of different solutes; the other causes are distillation and reputation. Eleven baths are considered, with identification of their alleged mineral content and the conditions for which each is beneficial. Like other authors, Fries stresses the importance of purging before entering the bath.

An unusual feature of his medicinal prescriptions is that in addition to herbs they include minerals, such as the very valuable imported lapis lazuli. Prescriptions should be based on the patient's dominant humor, but some alternative prescriptions are recommended because of their lesser expense. Consideration of the cost of bathing was quite unusual, although Fries phrases it satirically. The first of 13 rules about bathing is that "... before you enter the bath you should show that your satchel is filled with gold. From this you may obtain a favorable position. As soon as the money has a place, then so have you" (25). Apparently, prospective bathers are asked whether they have been purged because, according to the fifth rule: "... someone bathing should behave as though he has been cleansed naturally or by art" (i.e., enema or laxative) (26).

Paracelsus

Theophrastus Bombastus von Hohenheim (1493–1541) probably embellished his name with "Paracelsus" only in his last decade. Bombastus also was the middle name of his father and grandfather, and not a later ironic aspersion. His father had been an impoverished rural physician in the German-speaking part of Switzerland. Between the ages of fourteen and twenty-two, Paracelsus spent a few months at each of eight universities in southern Germany, Austria and northern

most useful essay on the properties and actions due to the wonderful nature of all natural baths located in German lands).

Italy. He probably never remained in one town for much more than a year, and died in Salzburg, Austria. During 1527–1528 Paracelsus was employed as the town physician of Basel. While he usually referred to himself as “Doctor Theophrast,” there is no documentation that he was awarded this degree by any of the universities he attended.⁴⁷

Paracelsus wrote two essays on therapeutic bathing: the first, called *Of the Naturals*, in 1525⁴⁸ and the other, *Of Pfeffers Bath*, in 1535. The former is organized under five subject headings: 1. The principle of separation, whereby the perceived universe has been created from the combination of its inactive precursors; 2. The explanation of the source of the heat in warm springs; 3. The qualities of the waters and the equivalence of mineral and herbal qualities; 4. The identification of the contents of baths; and 5. The description of the contents and therapeutic value of specific baths. Although Pfeffers (now Pfäfer’s) bath near Baden and Bad Ragaz, northeastern Switzerland, is cited in this essay, the later, shorter essay was based on an actual extended visit and probably was requested by the abbot of the adjacent monastery.⁴⁹

Paracelsus’s mystical fantasies about universal forces and their effects on mankind are displayed in both essays. His most radical deviation from the traditional Galenic medical beliefs comes to the surface in his *Liber entium morborum* wherein the causes, cures, and the role of physicians are most thoroughly explained. The five entia are not comparable to Galenic humors. *Ens astrorum* (pp. 12–23) represents the influence of the stars; *ens veneni* (23–35) is the effect of poisons or altered digestion; *ens naturale* (35–46) is the individual constitution; *ens spirituale* (47–55) is the effect of the mental or spiritual function. As he says:

The foregoing four explanations are for the benefit of heathens. We now address Christians in regard to *ens dei*, the submission to God ... You know that all health and disease come from God. Human disease may be healed in one of two ways: naturally and in perdition. The four entia constitute the former. Flagellation is the fifth. You should know that in the times of Hippocrates, Rhases, Galen, etc. medications were blessed; there were no hell-fires ... When he places his hope in medicine he is no Christian. All is predestined. Unbelieving physicians are devils sent by God to the sick. However God imbues the comprehending physician with the hour of recovery.⁵⁰

47 Philip Ball, *The Devil’s Doctor. Paracelsus and the World of Renaissance Magic and Science* (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 2006).

48 Paracelsus, *Von den natürlichen Bädern* (ed. Huser [see note 4], vol. 3, 297–326).

49 Werner Vogler, “Paracelsus und Pfäfers,” *Paracelsus und Salzburg*, ed. Heinz Dopsch and Peter F. Kraml. *Mitteilungen der Gesellschaft für Salzburger Landeskunde* 14 (1994): 517–24.

50 Paracelsus, *Bücher und Schriften*, ed. Johannes Huser (see note 4), Book I, 12–64; here 56–64.

The main source of heat in thermal springs is the reaction of water as it flows over lime (calcium oxide); heat generation is also demonstrated by the flaming of sodium that is dropped into water, as well as by the heat from volcanoes.⁵¹ However, the quality of heat is not related simply to its temperature, but to its source. “One heat is in the warmth of the sun, another effect is in the heat of manure, another in heat of burning wood, yet another heat is in all of the effects of burning stones (volcanoes), etc.”(III:8).⁵²

All things we perceive are components that have been separated by God. Thus, while Galenic philosophers considered water to be inherently “cold,” according to Paracelsus water is a combination of “heat” and “cold.” Evidence for this is to be found in *Von dess Bad Pfeffers*:

[There] the complex of water is separated, the hot in its arteries and streams, and the cold likewise in its other paths. Hence (ordinarily) nothing is so cold because it contains heat and nothing is so hot because it contains cold. Thus the perception of cold is separated, as is the warmth.⁵³

In *The Origin and Cause of Eleven Diseases* the third is *colored disease*. In describing this ailment Paracelsus incidentally states: “gall (oak gall) and vitriol (sulfur) give black; you see that atrament (a black substance, probably copper salts) and kachymia (the supposed precursor of metals) gives green. There are countless hidden colors that result from combinations. These also occur in people.”⁵⁴ This passage has been interpreted to indicate that Paracelsus had discovered the oak gall test for a solute in water. However, from the context this seems unlikely. Gabriel Fallopius (ca. 1523–1583, M.D. 1548), when professor of anatomy in Padua in 1564, described the use of oak gall to test water for vitriol and alum.⁵⁵ Thomas Erastus (1523–1583, M.D. 1552), a fellow Swiss, but a philosophical adversary of Paracelsus, confirmed this in 1572.⁵⁶ The color results from the reaction of tannic acid in the gall with the solutes.⁵⁷

51 Paracelsus, *Von den natürlichen Bädern* (see note 4), Book II, ch. I, 300–01.

52 Paracelsus, *Von den natürlichen Bädern* (see note 4), Book. III, ch. viii, 309.

53 Paracelsus. *Von dess Bad Pfeffers* (see note 4), 330.

54 Paracelsus, *Elf Tractat. Von Farbsuchten*, in *Bücher und Schriften*, ed. Huser (see note 4), vol. II: 132–38; here 133–37 (Eleventh essay. Of colored diseases).

55 Gabriele Falloppio, *De medicatis aquis atque de fossilibus* (Venice: Jordanis Ziletti, 1564).

56 Thomas Erastus, *Disputationum de medicina nova Philippi Paracelsi pars prima* (Basel: Petrum Pernam, 1572).

57 Allen G. Debus, *The Chemical Philosophy Paracelsian Science and Medicine in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (New York: Science History Publications, 1977), I: 111–13, 131–33.

Paracelsus placed less value on the bath water itself than on medications inserted into it. Furthermore, while all sixteenth-century writers refer to the need to consult a “learned physician,” in *Von den natürlichen Bädern* (Books 3-4) Paracelsus explains his necessary qualifications. The competent physician “... recognizes and understands the qualities and properties of baths because he not only must be thoroughly grounded in medicine, but also in philosophy.”⁵⁸ “It is proper for a physician to consider the many virtues of the qualities and contents, nature and properties of such [bathing] waters so that the inhabitants of such towns [i.e., potential users] may be well informed. It also is recommended that the well educated physician judge the core and basis of warm, cold and other therapeutic baths.”⁴⁹ “In treatments the physician must have judgment and understanding of which kind of nature brings the person to heal or not, or whether the time for healing is present.”⁵⁹ He continues:

A physician who sends patients to the bath has the highest responsibility to know in advance whether the patient cannot be healed in any other way. Possession of such knowledge is most praiseworthy. It is used thusly: A physician is perplexed by a patient, or is concerned about future worsening; for such a one a bath is advised as an excuse [for ignorance]. Many also use the baths for enjoyment. I shall not give an opinion here about those. But in the healing of diseases the procedure and prescription shall be viewed as being of use to them. You should first know that bathers lose various components of strength, and that the bath does not at once affect the disease for which it has been prescribed. Therefore a combination must be made for recovery to be completed ... One must pay careful attention to all the properties and components of the bath so that they resonate against the disease toward health, and not in behalf of the physician's excuse.⁶⁰

But judgment according to whom? Johann Weyer (1515–1588, M.D. 1537) devoted a chapter in his influential *The Deception of Demons (De Praestigiis Daemonum*, Basel 1563, 1564)⁶¹ to rejecting Paracelsus and his followers:

They have committed to memory the foul sayings of that insane man, and with them they rail at the ancient and sacrosanct art of medicine, and slander and trample it underfoot, fabricating new principles and new expressions, which even they do not understand or

58 Paracelsus. *Von den natürlichen Bädern* in *Bücher und Schriften*, ed. Huser (see note 4), Book III, ch. ii, 306.

59 Paracelsus. *Von den natürlichen Bädern*, in *Bücher und Schriften*, ed. Huser (see note 4), Book IV, ch. iii, 311.

60 Paracelsus, *Von den natürlichen Bädern*, in *Bücher und Schriften*, ed. Huser (see note 4), Book IV, ch. vii, 314–15.

61 Johann Weyer, trans. George Mora and Benjamin F. Kohn. *Witches, Devils, and Doctors in the Renaissance* (Binghamton, NY: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1991), see 154, 157.

defend by rational argument, content as they are with the confused heap of useless words with which Paracelsus filled his writings ... It was assuredly the ancient art of medicine, relying upon reason and confirmed by reason that these (Biblical) men cultivated the art which we practice even now. My quarrel is only with those who, under the pretext of this art (medicine) and because of their ignorance, untruthfully allege witchcraft and falsely impress a belief therein upon the ill.⁶²

An example of the contradictions in Paracelsus's writings appears in the article on the Pfeffersbad (1535, Pfäfers) in regard to the required dependence on physicians: "During and after the disease the strength of the bath is related to the time of the year. Therefore, recommendations are to be taken from the bath and not from doctors. The bath functions according to its will. (Furthermore) Daily experience is superior to the advice of books."⁶³

The combination of medicine with bathing implies the question which herbs need to be added to the water to potentiate its effect. For some diagnoses the additive is not simply tossed into the bath water, but is steeped for several days before it is used either for bathing or the extract is added to the bathwater. Perhaps as an extension of this practice, Paracelsus uniquely attributes the potency of some baths (e.g., Eger in Hungary) to the decomposition of organic matter rather than to minerals.⁴⁹ Since a rapid benefit should not be expected, a different combination of additives may be added to successive courses of bathing.

While later advocates of therapeutic bathing appear to be unanimous in stressing the importance of purging in preparation for the bath, this is converse from Avicenna, who in other respects is frequently cited positively. He stated, "The use of the bath for several successive days before purgation is a good preparative measure ... One should not take a bath afterwards because the effect of that would be to draw the morbid material to the skin."⁶⁴ Printed Latin translations of Avicenna's *Canon* existed as early as 1485, so that sixteenth-century writers who claimed familiarity with Avicenna may actually have had the opportunity to read his opinions.

⁶² Thomas G. Benedek, "A Comparison of the Psychological Insights of Petrarch and Johann Weyer," *Mental Health, Spirituality, and Religion in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Age*, ed. Albrecht Classen. Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture, 15 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2014), 424–63.

⁶³ Paracelsus. *Von dess Bad Pfeffers*, in *Bücher und Schriften*, ed. Huser (see note 4), Book IV, 340.

⁶⁴ Gruner, *A Treatise on The Canon of Medicine of Avicenna* (see note 23). 24, no. 973, 483.

Georgius Agricola

Georgius Agricola came from Saxony but was Italian trained, like most of the better known physicians of the time. However, he gained fame not primarily for a medical distinction, but as the ‘father of mineralogy/geology.’ The relevance of his contributions to therapeutic bathing pertains mainly to his considerations of the source, composition, and differentiation of water from various sites. His writings became perhaps the most important contemporary reference for late sixteenth-seventeenth century balneologists. Agricola concluded that there must be a second source of water besides rain, and this most logically was subterranean. He was bound to the ancient concept that water intrinsically is ‘cold.’ Wrestling with the maintenance of this belief resulted in the conclusion that the temperature of water has a greater therapeutic effect than its solute content:

When salty waters that have a mild astringent effect contain the same mixture [concentration] as ocean water they also have the same effects. When they contain more or less salt the effect varies with the concentration. However, when the mixture is the same [as in ocean water], waters that inherently are warmer are more effective than ocean water. Ocean water, just like warm water that flows cold from the earth and is heated, as well as other mixed waters are in every respect more potent. Therefore, one’s body is upset by drinking very salty waters.⁶⁵

Agricola understood the concept of comparison that is fundamental to scientific research, but was unable to bring himself to implement it with experimentation. This is evident in his concern with the potability of water:

The healthiest water for drinking comes from bubbling springs. This is better than water from still wells because of its constant agitation as it flows from the earth, compared to water that is enclosed in a well and must be hauled up. [The latter] therefore is denser and when it is consumed is less moistening to food, and provides less nutrition to the various parts of the body; it also is expelled from the kidneys and bladder with more difficulty. However, it becomes more suitable when it is obtained frequently.⁶⁶

65 Fraustadt, trans. and ed. (see note 21). Vol. II, 250.

66 Fraustadt, trans. and ed. (see note 21), Vol. III, 287.

Walther Hermannus Ryff

Walther Hermannus Ryff was probably born in Strasbourg (date unknown), where he became apprenticed to an apothecary. He referred to himself both as *medicus* and *chirurgus*, but whether he ever formally studied either art is also unknown. He died in about 1560.⁶⁷ His prolific writing career began no later than in 1538. From 1546 on he lived in Nuremberg, where his essay on baths and bathing was published in 1549. This unusually comprehensive tract reveals the beginning of the struggle to disengage from blind obeisance to ancient beliefs. I will not review his ideas about architecture and engineering, since they do not pertain to our topic. Moreover, Ryff was notorious for plagiarism.⁶⁸

A desire to explain the presence of heat in thermal springs had preceded interest in how to explain therapeutic effects that became attributed to bathing in or consuming spring water. The following review of six explanations for the heat of thermal spring waters was composed in *De ortu et causis subterraneorum*, published by Agricola in 1544 (five years before Ryff's work).⁶⁹ Ryff reviewed these explanations in the same order as Agricola:

1. According to “ancient diligent investigators,” subterranean water is heated as it courses beneath soft, porous earth that can be penetrated by the warmth of sunshine.
2. Hot wind blows forcefully into caves where water is trapped, so that it heats the water.
3. Wind blows so forcefully into caves where water is trapped that it is heated by crashing against the cave walls.
4. Moisture that is present within the earth is heated (no reason given), and the vapor rises and condenses into hot water.
5. Some of the great heat that is present in the earth is transferred to water as it passes through.
6. Water is heated by subterranean fire that heats air that is sequestered in subterranean caves and pits. For this he gives Empedocles (fifth century B.C.E.) as his source. (58–63).

⁶⁷ Josef Benzing, *Walther H. Ryff und sein litterarisches Werk. Eine Bibliographie*. Schriften der Philobiblon, 1 (Hamburg: Hauswedell, 1959)

⁶⁸ Lynn Thorndyke, *A History of Magic and Experimental Science* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1941), Vol. V, chapter xix. German Medicine, 430–44; here 443. For example, Conrad Gesner (in part) vented in 1545: “Ryff ... is a plagiarist ... with commentaries that are worthless except what he has copied from others, particularly [names of seven authors, including himself].

⁶⁹ Fraustadt, trans. and ed. (see note 21), *Die Entstehung der Stoffe im Erdinnern* (The Origin of Substances within the Earth), 83–187. See Book I: 95–97.

Ryff logically dismissed all of these hypotheses and conceded that no explanation has been proven: “... We have briefly shown the most plausible opinions pertaining to the basic cause of the great heat and constant immoderate warmth of the natural baths. However, volcanoes prove the existence of subterranean fire and only fire can heat water to the intensity that is observed in some springs.

Consequently, the different degrees of heat in various springs must be accounted for by the distance they are from a fire, since water cools with distance as it flows ... Everyone must conclude that bitumen (tar, asphalt) is the actual generator and sustainer of the fire that heats the sources of the warm baths, because bitumen burns in water and is fed by moisture and is able to burn for a long time.” (64–67) While Paracelsus presumed that water was heated primarily by flowing over lime, he also concluded that it cools with distance from its source.

Avicenna is ambiguous in regard to the source of the “best water.” “It comes from springs, provided they arise in places uncontaminated by extraneous qualities” (no. 364).⁷⁰ However, as he claimed, “Rain Water is the best of waters, especially when it falls during summertime or during a thunderstorm” (no. 372).⁷¹ He does not invoke astrological forces.

Ryff’s understanding is in part more scientific, but astrological as well. Rainwater is much cleaner and more pristine, and therefore less damaging when it is cold. This water furthermore contains the warmth of sunshine and the powerful influence of the stars. Its power to damage is partially altered and diminished because rainwater is nothing other than a reconstitution of the rising vapor and steam that is drawn up into the air by the heat of sunshine and action of the stars (16). This is his only resort to an astrological explanation.

Ryff recognized the toxicity of lead. Water should be let through a glazed duct or wood channel and not through a copper or lead pipe because the natural constitution of the water is changed by these and receives a foreign quality. Bathing utensils should be made of fine, unalloyed tin rather than from copper or brass, because when tin is not mixed with lead or white lead it is acknowledged to be a completely safe metal (paraphrased of 48–49).

Here, pertaining to water pipes, we find some differences from Agricola’s opinion. “When flow through copper pipes is interrupted they tarnish, and when one drinks water that has flowed over tarnish internal organs are damaged ... When it is necessary to use metal piping because neither clay nor wood chan-

⁷⁰ Gruner, *A Treatise on The Canon of Medicine of Avicenna* (see note 23), no. 364, 222.

⁷¹ Gruner, *A Treatise on The Canon of Medicine of Avicenna* (see note 23), no. 372, 224–25.

nels can tolerate the increased water pressure, lead pipes are better than copper pipes.”⁷²

Although rules for the behavior of bathers are provided consistently in the bathing literature, I will paraphrase those of Ryff, because they are the most comprehensive and explanatory:

- I. The entire body must be purged of all injurious humors and excesses of unnatural substances.
- II. In summer’s heat bathe in the coolest morning or evening.
- III. Reiterates no. I.
- IV. The bathing water should be clean and, to avoid contamination, patients with certain diseases and menstruating women should not enter the bath.
- V. Do not bathe too long because warm baths weaken by consuming the natural humors.
- VI. Do not eat while in the bath because the heat putrefies the food.
- VII. Persons who are lean and have delicate humors should not bathe too long.
- VIII. Keep warm after leaving the bath because the sweat pores have been opened and the organs are depleted of their humors.
- IX. Lie down to rest. The matter that has been mobilized will be expelled by perspiration and recovery is facilitated.
- X. After resting take mild exercise before eating to empty the secret passages of the sweat pores.
- XI. If exercise is not possible due to a physical disability, have light massage.
- XII. If massage is also contraindicated because of pain, ulcers, etc., insert a mild suppository such as are used by experienced physicians.
- XIII. Then have a light meal. If too much is eaten it may not be properly digested; if too little, nourishment may be extracted from the limbs.
- XIV. Do not over tax the stomach with food or drink.
- XV. Both food and drink should be nutritious, leave little superfluous waste, be easily absorbed and not constipating.
- XVI. Describes desirable foods, adjusted to the individual’s constitution and ailment as well as wine which should not go to the head very much.
- XVII. Do not drink water because the organs are heated and the water therefore is absorbed too rapidly.
- XVIII. Avoid sexual activity because this consumes the natural humors of the organs and thereby interferes with the absorption of nutrition.
- XIX. Bathe only once in a day, preferably at least seven hours after a meal.

72 Fraustadt (see note 21), Book III, 288.

- XX. To treat painful lame or contracted limbs apply the clay or gravel from the bath. This is more effective than the warm water itself.
- XXI. Exposure of diseased limbs to steam from bath water that has been boiled gives more rapid pain relief than bathing in this water (114–121).

English Authors

The first essays on bathing by English authors followed several German printed publications. They were written in English: published in 1562 by William Turner and followed ten years later by two essays composed by John Jones. The physician-cleric William Turner (ca. 1508–1568) earned the B.A. and M.A. degrees at Cambridge University, respectively in 1530 and 1533, and the M.D. at Bologna in 1542. In 1552 he was ordained an Anglican priest, and subsequently held several ecclesiastic appointments. While he also was practicing medicine he served two tenures as dean of Wells Cathedral (Somerset).⁷³

Turner claimed to know of the recent writings of two German-speaking authors who wrote in Latin, Georgius Agricola and Conrad Gessner (1516–1565), but cited no authors who wrote in German.⁷⁴ Whether he lacked access to these then-recent publications, or ignored them because he could not read the language, is unknown. The three English essays as they pertained to baths and bathing are largely similar in content and organization to the recent vernacular German publications.

There were two differences that probably were cultural. Both Turner and Jones dedicated their writings to nobles, as did Agricola, while most Germans either made no dedications, or addressed their publisher. Except for the concluding statement in Folz's poem: "As I believe, that the Lord God has created the baths for more than the doctors have to offer ... ,"⁷⁵ only Paracelsus among the cited German authors makes religious statements or allusions. Both English

⁷³ Whitney R. Jones, "Turner, William," *Dictionary of National Biography*, in association with the British Academy from the earliest Times to the Year 2000, ed. H. C. Mathew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), vol. 55, 674–77. See also the contribution to this volume by Thomas Willard.

⁷⁴ William Turner, *A booke of the natures and properties as well as of the bathes in England as of other bathes in Germany and Italy ...* (Cologne: Arnold Brickman, 1562).

⁷⁵ Folz, *Die Reimpaarsprüche* (see note 26), lines 733–38.

authors express their religiosity, with Turner citing Ecclesiasticus in the Apocrypha on the importance of physicians⁷⁶:

Show the physician due honor in view of your need of him,
 for the Lord has created him;
 Healing comes from the Most High ...
 The skill of the physician exalts him,
 The Lord has created medicines out of the earth,
 Was not water made sweet by wood,
 So that its strength might be shown?
 So that he might be glorified for his wonderful works.
 With them he cures and takes away pain.
 (Ecclesiasticus 38: 1-7)

Turner stated that he had “seen diverse natural baths in Italy and Germany” during his five-year exile (1553–1558, Queen Mary’s reign). In addition to his discussion of Bath he reviewed five German, two Swiss, and three Italian baths, and for six of them he cites literature references. Some are from within twenty years of his writing, while others are from previous centuries, such as Giovanni Dondi in regard to Wiesbaden and Michele Savonarola for Abano. The presentations of baths vary in length, and that pertaining to the Calderan Bath, near Verona, because three authorities are cited, is longer than the section on Bath that is the alleged purpose of the essay. There is a standard organization: location, mineral content, benefits and hazards for which an explanation is occasionally given.

The water of the Calderan bath is said to be more effective when it is ingested than bathed in. However, one must guard against water intoxication:

Some can neither void the water that they have consumed out again, neither by pissing nor by going to the stool, which persons if they should go forward in drinking of this water they should shortly fall into some disease like a dropsy or into the dropsy itself. (11r)

Another unusual recommendation in relation to meals is included in the review of the Calderan bath: “Wash your hands for this time with white wine, and beware that you touch no cold water.” (12r) This statement is interspersed between eating meat and fruit, so whether this is a hygienic or a symbolic recommendation is unclear.

Turner’s contemporary Conrad Gessner, who mentions Swiss Baden, demonstrated the common ambivalent thinking about baths:

⁷⁶ Edgar J. Goodspeed, *The Complete Bible*. An American Translation (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939), Apocrypha 122.

It comes by evil & wanton diet which is much more hurtful than at home, for both their pores and strength are resolved away with the bath and raw humors are carried hastily into the veins of too much meat and drink, or else of such as is taken out of season, and evil humors gathered either of evil diet or of meats of evil substance are the most speedily carried into the heart and other principal members by the heat of the bath made to flow, or else are melted into them. The opinion of the common people is foolish which holds that all diseases that are acquired in the bath may again be helped by the bath. Although it may chance that the bath may bring out some diseases which before lurked and were hidden in the body and afterward may waste up the matter of the same diseases ... yet for all that many diseases may arise during the bathing time by ill diet, which the bath can never heal. (5r-6r)

John Jones

John Jones was somewhat younger than Turner, whose essay he cites. Neither his date of birth or death, nor their locations are known. He seems not to have had any ecclesiastic appointments. Jones identified himself as a *phisition*, and as of 1579 he had “lived upon his practice by lawful grace of the Universities and had no other maintenance but it for these one and twenty years.”⁷⁷ Thus his medical activities must have begun no later than 1558. We are not told what contact he had had with any university, or whether a degree had ever been conferred upon him. Both of Jones’s balneological works were published in 1572, seven years before his last, a pediatric text. The only public bath that he mentions other than Bath is Buckstones,⁷⁸ i.e., Buxton, about which he simultaneously was writing a separate essay.

Jones appears to have obtained a sound classical education. Forty-four sources are listed in his two essays, compared to Turner’s twenty-six. Only Galen, Avicenna, Giovanni Dondi, Bartolomeo da Montagnana, Giovanni Michele Savonarola, and Georgius Agricola are cited by both authors. Only Turner included Folz and Paracelsus among his list of learned men who had written favorably about baths. This does not tell us which of these authors he had read. However, Jones claims that his list is of works that he had actually consulted. Contrary to other

⁷⁷ Samuel X. Radbill, “John Jones, Physition, the Second Writer on Pediatrics in English,” *Bulletin of the Institute for History of Medicine* 6 (1938): 145–62.

⁷⁸ John Jones, *The Benefit of the auncient Bathes of Buckstones, which cureth most greevous Sickneses, never before published* (London: Thomas East & Henry Myddleton, 1572).

physician-authors, Jones, in the *Introduction* to *Bathes ayde*⁷⁹ advertises his therapeutic accomplishments as follows:

I can testify of a thousand, and not so few that I have cured in all parts for these fourteen years: Some Frantic, Apoplectic, Epileptic, Melancholic, Paralytic, Gouty, Pleuritic, Hydroptic, some with Phthysis, Stone, Strangury (difficulty urinating), Consumption, Suffocations, Convulsions, Obstructions, Overflowings (incontinence), Barrenness, Descendings, Ascendings (of humors), the parts wasted, one part eaten, another ulcerated, the body distempered, as well as the spirits, humors, as member with most vehement argues: all the which fevers you may find in my *Dial of Agues* ... (published in 1566).

Jones states “Science itself is nothing else but an intelligent habit, knowing things by their causes and effects” (9v). Thereupon he reviews the possible causes of hot springs. The “very ignorant Savonarola” proposed an astrological explanation. The opinion of Johann di Dondi, an excellent learned man, “is all together false” (*Bathe's ayde*, Book 2, 11r). Jones considers several substances that continue to burn when they are placed on water and therefore have been incorrectly proposed as the fuel for subterranean fire that heats the water of springs. The true explanation was offered by Aristotle – the subterranean fuel is brimstone (sulfur):

Hot springs “are not to be through Magic, as the long received errors of certain writers have thought to persuade, that by magical conjuring those baths were made hot, a persuasion most detestable and vain, as by that you have perceived all together an illusion of the infernal and wicked spirits, to the end to pervert us from God ...” (*Bathes ayde*, ch. 2)

Jones relies on Agricola as his principal contemporary reference. However, in discussing the diagnostic unreliability of the color of water, he demonstrates the different approach of a physician and a physicist. Jones agrees that the color of the water of baths is due to substances that are suspended or dissolved therein, but (paraphrased) color adds little or nothing to the knowledge of its therapeutic virtues. This opinion is supported by an unfortunate example: “Many things are of colour white [i.e., colorless] ... Snow is very cold and chalk is very hot, yet either of them is most white” (*Bathes ayde* II 17r). Agricola also questions the diagnostic usefulness of color, but rather for the chemical analysis of the water rather than its therapeutic utility. The difficulty results from the presence of three independent variables: quantity of solutes, their color, and whether the color is

⁷⁹ John Jones, *The bathes of Bathes ayde: Wonderfull and most excellent agaynst very many Sickneses* (London: William Jones, 1572).

temperature dependent.⁸⁰ Jones clearly defines the temperature of water at any point as the product of the temperature at its source and the distance from the source “because in the passage some heat evaporates continually.” (16r) Agricola adds a third variable, the content of solutes.

While Jones uses different names for the same ailment: such as hemorrhoids and piles, Turner lists headache from a hot cause and headache from a cold cause, and he shrewdly differentiates these from migraine, usually a one-sided headache. Jones demonstrates his cognizance of recent publications by including the “green sickness” in his list of fifty-one diseases. This ailment had just been described in 1554 as *De Morbo Virgineo* by Johannes Lange (1485–1565, M.D. Pisa 1522), a German physician.⁸¹ It subsequently was called chlorosis, and has been shown to be iron deficiency anemia.⁸² In a few instances Turner gives a sufficiently clinical description to confirm a modern diagnosis. Among the virtues of the Pepper Bath, he observes: “It is good for the flux to the chamber pot, by the best physicians called Diabetes. That is when a man makes water oft and much, even of almost the same color as the drink that he has received, and thereby has an unquenchable thirst.” The sweetness of diabetic urine was first described by Thomas Willis (1621–1675) in 1675.⁸³

Thomas Venner

Jones’s essay on Bath may be compared to an article first published in 1620 by Thomas (or Tobias) Venner (1577–1661), who was a physician at Bath. It was reprinted several times until 1660, the year before he was executed for revolutionary activities.⁸⁴ Little more about him is known. Differing from Turner’s poor opinion of Bath a century earlier, he opines: “There are four public Baths, so fairly built, and fitted with such conveniences for bathing as the like (I suppose) is nowhere else to be found.” In addition to these baths, which differ in temper-

⁸⁰ Fraustadt, trans. and ed. (see note 21), Book I: 99.

⁸¹ Ralph H. Major, *Classic Descriptions of Disease* (Springfield, IL: C. C. Thomas, 1945). Chlorosis, 487–89.

⁸² Robert P. Hudson, “The Biography of Disease: Lessons from Chlorosis,” *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 51 (1977): 448–63.

⁸³ Thomas Willis, *Pharmaceutica Rationalis or an Excitation of the Operations of Medicines in Humane Bodies* (London: Dring, Harper and Leigh, 1679). See also Major, *Classic Descriptions* (see note 80). Diabetes 241–42.

⁸⁴ Charles F. Mullett, *Public Baths and Health in England, 16th–18th Century*. Bulletin of the History of Medicine, Supplement 5 (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1946).

ature, there is “a little Bath for Lepers.”⁸⁵ Like Jones, for Venner “Sickness is a symptom of Sin” (1). Venner employs rhetoric differently than other writers with whom I am familiar. He explains why “people of all sorts and from all parts of this Kingdom [come] to those famous Waters; and the little benefit that many at great expense and trouble receive thereby ...” (16).

Although those waters contain sulfur, niter, and some bitumen, he attributes their benefit for various circumstances to exposure to different degrees of heat, rather than the solutes. Hot waters “open the pores, resolve, attenuate, digest, consume and draw forth superfluities, and thereby strongly heal and dry the whole habit of the body” (19). Hot as these baths are, they damage bodies that are inherently hot and dry, making it “carriion like lean,” but counteract all sorts of conditions that do not proceed from a hot cause. Even if one receives advice from one’s local physician, one should consult a physician at Bath because only he can advise which of the four baths one should use, and for how long.

One of the differences from Jones is that Venner claims that these baths (unspecified which) “are also singularly profitable to women, for they help them of barrenness, and of all diseases and imperfections of the Matrix [womb] proceeding of a cold and moist cause” (20). Presumably the learned physician knows which these are. Jones only includes pregnancy as a circumstance to avoid the bath.

Reasons Not to Use Public Baths

Recommendations and regulations against the use of public baths appeared inconsistently in various jurisdictions. These fell into four categories: 1. Prevention of the spread of certain diseases; 2. hazard to an individual because of his/her constitution; 3. belief that a particular bath is ineffective against certain diseases; 4. control of immorality by banning prostitutes and/or having a separate bath only for women.

Contra-indications for bathing according to various authors included being febrile, weak, abnormally slender, consumptive, or pregnant, as well as for youths whose skin would become wrinkled and tanned, and inclement weather. Martin Ruland (1532–1602), a physician to the duke of Bavaria, in commenting on forty-six baths, identified eleven which certain persons should avoid. The main

⁸⁵ Thomas Venner, *A Necessary and Compendious Treatise of the Famous Baths of Bath* (London: Henry Hood, 1638), 1 and 16.

reason was consideration of too great a personal hazard, particularly having an excessively hot and dry constitution.⁸⁶ Having a severe disease, such as consumption or leprosy, seems to have been a secondary consideration, or might have been the cause of the hot and dry constitution. Syphilis is deemed curable at four baths, and is not a reason for exclusion at any. Fracastorius, in his only comment on bathing, states with regard to syphilis:

For example, in regard to the baths at Albano, or Poretta, or ours near Verona, since they can dry, deterge, subtilize (divide?), and induce sweat, my answer is that, in my experience, they do little or no good. I think, myself, that the reason is that they are too weak to liquefy substance so thick and so viscous.⁸⁷

Turner commented on the Calderan Bath at Verona in this way: “The water of this bath in no wise will help them that are sick in the French Pocks, whether they drink the water or bathe themselves in it.” Ryff, among the eighteen baths on which he comments, cites one in regard to syphilis: The Margrave’s Bath (in Württemberg) “heals eczema, chronic open wounds, and ulcers from the French Disease” (105). Two baths should be avoided by bathers who are mentally or physically too weak to tolerate it.

Public Health

Jones gives one warning not made by Ryff: “In pestilent seasons all baths must be utterly avoided” (*Bathes ayde*, Book 2, 11r). It is noteworthy that fear of contagion typically was not discussed in the balneological publications, while they exist in some legislation. By implication, contagion was not being attributed to the water, but rather to the proximity of bathers. Potential bathers were encouraged to carry water from the communal baths to use in their homes, which, of course, implies that it is not the water that transmits diseases. The earliest and surprisingly well documented conflicts occurred in Nuremberg at the very beginning of the epidemic of syphilis. On 17 November 1496 the city council passed this remarkable ordinance:

⁸⁶ Martin Ruland, *Vom Wasserbaden, drey Theyl* (Dillingen: Sebaldum Mayer, 1568) (On Bathing in Water, three parts).

⁸⁷ Wright, trans. *Hieronymi Fracastorii* (see note 40), Book III, ch. x, 291.

Bathers [i.e., proprietors of baths] are forbidden, with a fine of ten Gulden, from permitting the severely ill (syphilitics) to bathe. Furthermore, at a fine of ten Gulden, bleeders and barbers who attend the same shall not use the razors, cups, etc. any longer on the healthy.

Ten Gulden was a huge fine, approximating the annual income of many workers. Five months later, in recognition of the desirability of bathing, a clarification was published:

Those who have the French disease may not bathe. But if they desire the natural bath, they are permitted to take this water home.⁸⁸

Soon after the publication of the Nuremberg ordinance there are records of comparable actions over time in Frankfurt am Main:

1. 20 December 1496: Whereas the bather of the Red Bath [the principal public bath] has an employee who is said to have the French disease, he shall be told to leave, or the bath will be closed.
2. 11 July 1497: The bather of the Red Bath is notified that people who have had, or still have the disease must be expelled. The Council otherwise will close the bath.
3. 26 September 1497: The bather of the Red Bath is notified to close the bath because many people therein have been infected.

After several appeals to the Council:

4. 13 March 1498: The Red Bath has been inspected and bathing henceforth is permitted. [signed] The Master Builder. And the wretches shall be told where they incurred their disablement, so that henceforth no one affected by the (French) disease shall bathe.⁸⁹

Note that the inspection was assigned to the equivalent of an architect, not a physician.

The proprietor, voluntarily or not, soon was replaced, but his successor also failed an inspection. In October 1500 the bath was closed again and, despite appeals, was not permitted to reopen until February 1502, upon satisfactory cleaning and payment of a fine.⁹⁰

Syphilis presented a special conflict in regard to bathing, contagion and debauchery. From the first European recognition of epidemic syphilis in about

⁸⁸ Karl Sudhoff, "Die ersten Massnahmen der Stadt Nürnberg gegen die Syphilis in den Jahren 1496 und 1497," *Archiv für Dermatologie und Syphilis* 116 (1913): 1–30.

⁸⁹ Karl Sudhoff, "Anfänge der Syphilisbeobachtungen und Syphilisprophylaxe zu Frankfurt am Main," *Dermatologische Zeitschrift* 20 (1912): 95–116.

⁹⁰ Karl Sudhoff, "Vorsorge für die Syphiliskranken in Würzburg und Augsburg zu Ende des 15. bis ins zweite Viertel des 16. Jahrhunderts," *Dermatologische Wochenschrift* 97 (1933): 1431–45.

1494–1495, it was associated with prostitution. However, the probable cause of the disease was deemed to be immorality rather than a venereally transmitted germ. While the exclusion of prostitutes from baths, both as employees and clients, was a general policy, it was not related to control of the spread of syphilis until the latter part of the sixteenth century. In some towns ordinances sought not only to exclude prostitutes from baths, but also from the community. A Nuremberg ordinance of August 1498 stated that if a prostitute did not leave voluntarily, she would be arrested and sentenced not to come within five miles of the town for three years.⁹¹ How rapidly syphilis prohibitions spread is unclear. An ordinance similar to the one in Nuremberg was enacted in Augsburg (also Bavaria) in 1549.⁹²

The French essayist Michel de Montaigne (1533–1592), in a description of a therapeutic visit he had made to Plombières (Plummers Bad) in 1580, recorded its eight regulations, which were posted in French and German. Four contain a concise combination of morality and public health:

4. All prostitutes and shameless girls are forbidden to enter the said baths, or to approach within five hundred paces of them on pain of being whipped at the four corners of the said bath; and on pain, for the hosts who shall have received and harbored them, of imprisonment of their persons and arbitrary fine.
5. Under the same penalty, all persons are forbidden to use toward the ladies, gentle-women, and other women and girls who are at the said baths, any lascivious or shameless language, to touch them dishonorably, or to enter or leave the said baths disrespectfully, contrary to public decency.
6. And because, by the benefit of said baths, God and nature procure so many cures and reliefs, and a decent cleanliness and purity is required to obviate many contagions and infections that might be engendered here; the said Master of the said baths is expressly ordered to take pains to examine the persons of those who shall enter the baths ...
7. Moreover it is prohibited and forbidden to all persons coming from infected places to enter or approach this place of Plombières, on pain of death.⁹³

How enforced or enforceable these rules were, or how many baths developed similarly comprehensive regulations is uncertain.

⁹¹ Claudia Stein, *Die Behandlung der Franzosenkrankheit in der frühen Neuzeit am Beispiel Augsburgs. Medizin, Gesellschaft und Geschichte, Beihefte*, 19 (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2003), 185–86.

⁹² Donald M. Frame, *Travel Journal 858–1094*, in *The Complete Works of Montaigne: Essays, Travel Journal, Letters*, newly trans. by Donald M. Frame (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1957), 874–75.

⁹³ Robert G. Bury, trans., *Plato in Twelve Volumes* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1961), IX. *Timaeus, Critias, Cleitophon, Menexenus, Epistles. Timaeus*, Diet 245.

Dietetics

The content of the diet and its adjustments were cornerstones of therapeutics in the sixteenth century and into the twentieth. This emphasis goes back two millennia to Plato who stated in *Timaeus*: “One ought to control all such diseases by means of dieting rather than irritate a fractious evil by drugging.”⁹⁴ Jones acknowledges Plato, but attributes the same wording to Aetius of Amida (sixth century C.E.). The bathing essays vary in the proportion of space they devote to dietetics. However, there was considerable agreement that the contents and quantity of diet and time of meals have more therapeutic importance than bathing.

Galen had most concisely explained the relationship of diet to humors in “On the Natural Faculties”:

When nutriment becomes altered in the veins by the innate heat, blood is produced when it is in moderation, and the other humors when it is not in proper proportion ... Thus, those articles of food which are by nature warmer are more productive of bile, while those which are colder produce more phlegm:

The diseases which are primary and most generic are four in number and differ from each other in warmth, cold, dryness and moisture ...⁹⁵

In *On Mixtures*, III⁹⁶ as well as in *On the Properties of Foodstuffs*, Book I,⁹⁷ Galen proposes that a small number of foods act not only as nourishment, but also as drugs, in that they exert an effect on bodily functions. Only in the former essay does acting as a drug depend on it as not being digested. This concept is reiterated by Avicenna in dividing “medicinal” nutrients from foods that are strictly nutritious. Therefore “the essential basis of the meal is *not* of medicinal nutrients” (no. 759).⁹⁸ Medicinal substances may also be nutritious, but have an action apart from the primary qualities of foods (no. 347).⁹⁹ For example, “They render the blood too watery, and so it is apt to ferment. Hence, the juices of fruits, unless taken at a reasonable time (before a meal), pave the way for putrefactive processes.” Consistent with this concept, Turner advocated avoiding “cherries and such like fruit.” Significantly, without citing either Galen or Avicenna, Jones states “There is of nourishments a double faculty: one by which they alter (bodily

⁹⁴ Galen, *On the Natural Faculties* (see note 8), II:viii, 183.

⁹⁵ Galen, *Selected Works* (see note 7). *On Mixtures*, Book III, 271–73.

⁹⁶ Galen. *On the Properties of Foodstuffs*, trans. by Owen Powell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 34–35.

⁹⁷ Gruner, *A Treatise on The Canon of Medicine of Avicenna* (see note 23), no. 759, 394–95.

⁹⁸ Gruner, *A Treatise on The Canon of Medicine of Avicenna* (see note 23), no. 347, 214–15.

⁹⁹ Galen, *On the Properties of Foodstuffs* (see note 95), 115.

functions), the other by which they nourish. The former is known by color, smell and taste ... The latter is known by no reason but experience only ... " (*Buckstones* 8r-9v)

According to Galen (*On the Properties of Foodstuffs*, Book III), pork is the most nutritious of all foods, although the sinewy parts produce blood that is more full of mucus. Young animals, pigs, calves, goats, are more easily digestible than mature animals. However, lambs produce too much mucous. Aged animals are too fibrous and dry to be easily digested.¹⁰⁰

In his basic dietetic ideas Jones follows Avicenna precisely. According to the Persian's rationale, the physician "prescribes a lessened amount of food if he wished the digestive powers to be conserved. The very fact of taking nutriment is a tax on the digestive faculties." However, "The physician must also be watchful that the natural powers should become too enfeebled or an illness should become too grave" (nos. 906-909).¹⁰¹ For Jones nutrition can be controlled by altering either the quantity or the nutrient quality of feeding, or a combination thereof. Diminution of quantity is usually recommended in acute illnesses. "We select highly nutritious foods which digest slowly, when we wish to restore the strength of the patient... We select a feebly nutritious food for a person whose pores are choked with dense matter (i.e., when absorption is slowed)" (*Buckstones* II).

Jones mixes recommendations with reportage. Thus we learn which grains are preferentially used for which purposes by which social classes in various counties. Bread is baked with "clean wheat" (husks removed) in Somerset, rye in Staffordshire, oats in Cornwall; "rustics" mainly use lentils or buckwheat. The best bread is baked in York because the best wheat flour is used there. The yeomanry bake great loaves, while rolls are baked for the nobility (*Buckstones* II, 9r).

Despite the focus on dietetics, Jones was unusual in being concerned with the sense of taste, not in regard to food, but in regard to the identification of solutes in water:

Taste, I say, above all other senses, as all the learned physicians affirm, is to be trusted... Taste truly is a sense of feeling, which in the tongue, or roof of the mouth tries savoring. Savor is a perfect straining of the dry part of the humors wrought by heat... [The] instrument or organ is a skin pellicle, or film, stretched in the over part of the tongue, under the rough and hollow flesh, full of holes, like a sponge (*Buckstones* II, 18v).

100 Gruner, *A Treatise on The Canon of Medicine of Avicenna* (see note 23), no. 906–no. 909, 461–63.

101 Galen, *On the Therapeutic Method*. Books I and II, trans. R. J. Hankinson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), Book II:4, 2–3, p. 47–48.

This is an advance over Galen who only suggested several possible explanations for the perception of taste (*Therapeutic Method* II, 4.3):

Suppose that the tongue can perceive tastes because its pores have a certain degree of tightness, or because it has the right proportion of heat, or that a particular mixture of dryness and wetness that allows perception, or the right proportion of hot and cold. If perception of flavors requires the presence of balance between two factors, it could be between tightness and looseness of pores.¹⁰²

While Jones gives his idea of how flavors are perceived, Ryff tells us how flavors are generated. Flavors identify the quality of water that is therapeutic for particular ailments, as well as identifying plants for edibility and for insertion in bath water. Agricola explains the origin of flavors as follows:

No substance itself has a flavor, and the purer each is the less does it contribute. Flavors necessarily result from mixtures and they must result when the earthy (dry) substance mixes with a moist, or in reverse, a moist with an earthy so that one soon overwhelms the other. Thus the basis of taste is earth and water. The subterranean heat boils, alters and originates them... In regard to waters, the purer they are and the least admixed the more tasteless they are and the nearer they approach the actual nature of the substance.⁹⁷

Ryff essentially paraphrases this hypothesis. Since springs emanate from within the earth, the fact that spring waters have various flavors means that all flavors are present in the earth (47–48). Odors differ from flavors only in that they require greater heat to be generated. (71)

The dietetic opinions of Fries, Ryff, and some of Paracelsus can easily be compared. These authors agreed that eating the meat of young hoofed animals is healthy, and eating land fowl is also desirable. However, why eating water fowl is contra-indicated is not explained. Each author severely restricted the use of fruits and vegetables. Ryff considered milk products to be healthy, while Fries and Paracelsus did not. Ryff favored eating eggs, while according to Fries they must be hard boiled. This was the time of the burgeoning spice trade with India, of which black pepper was the largest item. However, among spices the use of cinnamon and nutmeg were favored, while all “sharp spices” were to be avoided.

The most remarkable inconsistencies in the Paracelsian texts pertain to nutrition. In the essay *Von dess Bad Pfeffers* he, like other authors, states that certain foods must be prohibited, while in the essay on *Tartaric Diseases* we find the following contradicting sophistry (paraphrased):

102 Fraustadt, trans. and ed. (see note 21), Book I: 100–01.

Medicine should always accompany the bath, and in this circumstance all of the medicine may consist of food and drink... Nutriment reaches the whole body and all limbs and finds everything in the body, good and bad. So, since nutriment is a medicine, the medicine finds the disease wherever it is in the body... Consequently it should be dealt with as such, meaning that the patient is given everything that he desires: meat, fish, wine, etc., excluding nothing. And because the greater enjoyment and the desire is, that much greater is the attraction in the entire body and the more forcefully does the nutriment reach there. And even if this very food is unhealthy, this should be ignored because it directs and induces, seeks and finds the pain.¹⁰³

Among the cited writers diet is discussed in greatest detail by Jones in his essay on the Buxton bath. Calling upon the support of Galen and Avicenna, he clearly disagrees with Paracelsus:

It is evident (to such as are expert in the Dietetic part of physic) in what quantity and frequency meat ought to be given to the sick. Drink either mixes parts of the meat or else conveys it throughout the whole body. Therefore seeing this art of all arts is the chiefest, it is not the least part of knowledge to appoint diet, as Galen judged ... be observed, and contraries neglected. (8r)

Statements that recognize the importance of hydration are eminently plausible: "A moist diet profits all persons troubled with a fever, and especially children." Others are not:

They who, because of grief or because of the state of the sickness, have weakened faculties, need now and then to evacuate (the digestive tract) rather than filling (with food). He who gives meats to such is the cause of great hurt. It is most likely that those who are ignorant in Physick can prescribe what meats, or at what times, or what quality or quantity ought to be given to the sick. Hence it is evident that every sick person does not require nourishment (6r).

There was professional agreement that eating and drinking should be restricted during the preparation for taking a bath, prohibited or at least discouraged during bathing, and was advised to be limited to modest use of easily digestible victuals immediately after the bath. This was particularly important in thermal baths because the heat causes, as was commonly assumed, pathogenic putrefaction of stomach contents. Consequently the work of digestion should be minimized.

¹⁰³ Paracelsus, *Das Buch von den Tartarischen Kranckheiten*, ed. Huser (see note 4), Vol. I: 244–342. See also ch. 17, 323.

Exercise

Ancient Greek writers, who were so esteemed in the Renaissance, emphasized maintenance of health over treatment of diseases. Plato, while he praised dietetic treatment of disease, favored gymnastics for maintaining health, and this was because it prevents constipation.¹⁰⁴

According to Galen five centuries later, “Physical exercise is of considerable importance for health. Its predominance over food was established in the past by the best philosophers and doctors.”¹⁰⁵ (The Exercise with the Small Ball) Yet while advocates of therapeutic bathing usually discussed the primary or auxiliary importance of diet, despite their obeisance to Galen, only Jones wrote specifically about exercise. We do not know to which writings in Latin translation Jones had access. Thus, in his book on *Buckstones* Jones cites only *De sanitate tuenda* (On Hygiene). He differentiates exercise from ordinary activity: “In whom there is no alteration in breath it is not to be called an exercise.”¹⁰⁶ Exercise achieves evacuation of excrements and conservation of the state of the body, which means hardness of the parts (greater endurance), increase of natural heat (improved nutrition of the entire body, and swift movement of the breath (another effective cleansing of wastes).

For ladies, girls, and feeble men Jones recommends a game in which balls of different weights are to be tossed into a bench with eleven holes (of different diameters?). Playing catch with a “yarn ball” seems to have been an alternative, as well as bowling, either on a lawn or alley. However, the noblest exercise was shooting, either using a long bow or a cross-bow. “This practice of all others is the manliest, leaving no part of the body unexercised ...” (*Buckstones* II, 12v–12r). It is difficult now to see how shooting exercises any part of the body besides the arms. It certainly does not cause the heavy breathing that is desired as the indicator that an exercise is sufficiently vigorous to benefit health. However this may be consistent with Galenic reasoning. According to Galen, for an activity to be called “exercise” bodily heat must be generated, but other than by mental perturbation. It may be integral to labor or performed for enjoyment. Galen emphasized the importance of exerting the whole body and therefore preferred ball games to running. However, heat can result from forceful exertion with or without movement.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ Bury, trans., *Plato in Twelve Volumes* (see note 93), 243.

¹⁰⁵ Galen, *Selected Works* (see note 7), *Exercise with the Small Ball*, 299–304.

¹⁰⁶ Robert M. Green, *A Translation of Galen's Hygiene* (see note 38), Book I, ch. VIII–X, 79–86.

Religiosity

Because of their Christian faith, both Turner and Jones make excuses for the failure of a bathing regimen to cure. Jones argued that one should not decry God if one is not healed,

... for some infirmities are deeper rooted in the parts because of their prolonged duration so that no remedy will quickly thereby be redressed ... Therefore my advice is that such as have consulted the physicians thank God, as all godly and wise men from the beginning of time have done. (*Bathe's ayde*, 4, 33v)

Turner expresses the same sentiment at greater length:

Some, if they are not healed while they are bathing cry out both against the bath which heals any other sick in the same diseases that they are sick in, and the Physician also that counseled to come to the bath. Such men must learn that they must not assign God time to heal them at the bath. It is not one or two day's work for the bath, by [inducing] sweating and subtle blowing to dry up and waste the evil matter of the disease, to make good humors occupy the place of such evil humors as have been there before. (17v-r)

Wirsung

A review of balneological literature conveys a distorted impression of the importance that was accorded to bathing therapy. The German physician, Christoph Wirsung (1500–1571), published a comprehensive 790 page textbook of medicine in 1568. It was translated into English in 1598 and may be considered to reflect more general medical practice of that time. He found only two indications for balneologic treatment:

1. “In Dead Palsey (paralysis) bathing is also much commended, thereof there be two kinds naturally: sea water, or that is sulferish by nature: others which be prepared with herbs and such like.”
2. “To treat lame limbs exposure to medicated vapors are an alternative to baths. If one cannot get the natural bath, or will not use artificial baths, which are always to be used before the anointing herewith to open the pores. For this disease (cramp) is also commended for to bathe in lukewarm water. But to (achieve) the end it might be the more forcible, cooling herbs may be decocted therein.”¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁷ Christoph Wirsung, *Praxis Medicinae Universalis, or a General Practice of Physicke*, trans. by Jacob Mosan (London: Edmund Bollifant, 1598; original German: Heidelberg, 1568), see 611.

Conclusion

In the story of therapeutic bathing we see, on the one hand, a conflict between the presumed therapeutic effects of temperature on humors, and thereby on diseases, and on the other, an emphasis on the means to conserve energy. Furthermore, we observe that risk versus benefit considerations are not a modern concept. They depend on contemporary beliefs regarding effectiveness: What are the benefits and potential hazards of thermal bathing versus reliance on herbal therapeutics?

Although attempts to define formally energy in its various ramifications is a nineteenth-century development, the question regarding “energy” obviously concerned already sixteenth-century thinkers dealing with thermal bathing. For thermal bathing to be safe, behavioral modifications are necessary, both to minimize the effects of behavioral sources of energy loss and to compensate for the energy that is lost from exposure to the heat of being immersed in a hot bath. Energy is lost by radiation from the skin, particularly from the head. This is minimized by wearing a hat or cap. Evacuate bowels and bladder before exposure to the energy depriving heat of the thermal bath. Energy is lost by exertion, which includes the exertion of defecation, urination and sexual intercourse: therefore, also by abstention. It is lost in the work of digesting food; therefore, as the authors recommended, fast. Despite adherence to energy sparing measures, the bather exits the thermal bath into a cooler environment.

To minimize the consequent thermal shock, the bather, who had been naked, must don a robe and then lie down for an hour or so, preferably falling asleep, to regain energy. Then, so as not overly to tax the energy resources of the depleted digestive system, he may only eat easily digestible food. Sufficiently prolonged bathing regimens could, of course, be coincidentally associated with the remission of self-limited diseases. Despite the variable but numerous medical benefits that were attributed to various baths, bathing, because of its potential hazards to bodily energy stores and humoral balance, was consistently identified as a last resort, to be considered only after the failure of herbal and dietetic therapeutics. The reluctance to admit the lack of benefit that must have been obvious in regard to most diseases that had recognizable signs may best be attributed to a combination of desperation and, for some, economic gain.

Finally, to demonstrate the erratic advance of scientific beliefs, I shall cite Christian W. Hufeland (1762–1836, M.D. Göttingen 1783), one of the most esteemed German physicians of the early nineteenth century and a new advocate of medical bathing. Writing in 1820, he is reminiscent of the fourteenth century:

More evanescent and penetrating than the gas forming constituents of mineral water is the participation of the subterranean heat. This has, in my opinion received much too little consideration as an actual component that by itself has a peculiar great penetrating, enlivening, but also chemically dissolving and decomposing effect. It is the most outstanding of the effects of warmth that it unites the dynamic and the vital chemical effects in the highest degree. But what has been observed even less is that which has become a certainty for me: the difference between the subterranean volcanic heat and that which is artificially generated. It furthermore is known that the water that is heated beneath the surface is more tightly bound and penetrating than the ordinary, and that such water requires much longer to cool than artificially heated water.¹⁰⁸

Addendum

Hans Sachs

The Urban Lady at the Natural Bath (Die puergerin im wiltpad)¹⁰⁹

A wealthy citizen of Augsburg
 Had a wife who could not conceive,
 Which saddened them both.
 They sought advice from a physician
 Who gave her many cleansing potions
 That, however, were ineffective.
 Finally, since nothing helped
 To make her pregnant with a child
 The physician advised
 That she should quickly travel to the bath at Gastein.
 Having been chilled
 In the cold winter time
 Is the reason that no child is born,
 As happens to many wives.
 In a few days the lady prepared herself
 To travel to the bath in a covered wagon.
 She took a maid with her and a wagon driver
 And also a little shaggy dog
 With which she passed all her leisure hours.
 Once they arrived at the actual bath

108 Wilhelm C. Hufeland, *Praktische Übersicht der vorzüglichsten Heilquellen Deutschlands nach eigenen Erfahrungen*. 2nd. ed. (1815; Berlin: G. Reimer, 1820), 341 (Practical survey of the preferred therapeutic springs of Germany according to personal experiences). My own translation.

109 Sachs, *Sämtliche Fabeln und Schwänke* (see note 27), vol. 6: 283–84, no. 1017. This is my own translation.

They both bathed.
Now, there were many young fellows at the bath
Who would warm women and girls
And got both of their bellies to swell.
As it walked,
The doggy also showed that it was pregnant.
It was the nature of the bath
To have impregnated all three.
As soon as the wagon driver realized this
He quickly took them home.
When the gentleman saw the driver
He was startled, frightened – the situation was not right.
He asked: "Has the lady suffered an injury?"
"No" said the driver, "the situation is all right.
The bath is stimulating and very fertile.
The lady has already conceived a child,
The maid has also become pregnant,
And the doggy as well."
As the gentleman heard the explanation
He became furious but hid his anger.
The driver spoke: "You have received
Quite wonderful luck.
All three are safe,
And had I not run away
I would surely also have become pregnant.

13 August 1558

Thomas Willard

Testing the Waters: Early Modern Studies

Introduction

“All men by nature desire to know,” wrote Aristotle (384–322 B.C.E.). The first philosophers, he said, wanted to know the causes and principles of things and especially how the material world arose. He noted that Thales (ca. 624–ca. 546 B.C.E.), “the founder of this group, says the first principle is water (for which reason he says the earth rests on water).” He added that Anaximenes (ca. 585–ca. 528 B.C.E.) thought air came before water, while Heraclitus (ca. 535–ca. 475 B.C.E.) thought fire came first and Empedocles (ca. 490– ca. 430 B.C.E.) thought all three elements came into existence at the same time as earth, the fourth element. Because none of these four elements was adequate to generate “the nature of things,” Anaxagoras (ca. 510–428 B.C.E.) concluded that reason preceded all the world’s order and beauty.¹ That did not stop thinkers from wondering how all other substances emerged or from positing the existence of a “first matter,” suggested in a fragment of Anaxagoras: “In everything there is a portion of everything else, except of mind [*nous*]; and in some things there is a fragment of mind also.”²

As Europe entered the early modern period, almost two thousand years later, no one had really got beyond the thought of Thales as recalled by Aristotle: that the “seeds” (*spermata*) of all things are moist, and that moisture drives heat and growth. Of all the four known elements, water seemed the most essential to life itself. But there was little further understanding of water beyond its place in the cosmic dance of elements that Aristotle had described.³ However, the next three centuries between 1500 and 1800 saw a breakthrough in the understanding of water: what it was and how it blended with other substances to form waters of great variety. This chapter will review the contributions of several men and

¹ Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, bk. 1, chpts. 1, 3; 980a, 983b–984b. *The Complete Works of Aristotle: The Revised Oxford Translation*, ed. Jonathan Barnes, 2 vols. Bollingen Series, 71 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), vol. 2, 1552, 1555–56.

² Anaxagoras, Fragment 7, in *The Presocratics*, ed. Philip Wheelwright (New York: Macmillan, 1966), 160.

³ Aristotle, *Meteorology*, bk. 1, ch. 2; 339a; *Complete Works of Aristotle* (see note 1), vol. 1, 556–57

Thomas Willard, The University of Arizona

women from that period who tried hard to understand what water really was and what it really was not, after all.

Two Kinds of Water, and More

Martin Ruland (1532–1602) was born in the ancient city Freising, near Munich. He established a medical practice there, but moved it to Lauingen on the Danube near Dillingen, and he seems to have taught medicine in the secondary school there.⁴ He was also qualified in languages, and compiled a book of Greek and Latin synonyms as well as a book on copiousness in the Classical languages.⁵ In 1568, he wrote a book in the vernacular German on the medical uses of bathing, with a comparison of sweet and metallic waters and a list of spas in the German-speaking world.⁶ At the same time, he offered a Latin study of medical uses of waters, including thermal waters.⁷ He later wrote a Latin treatise on the medical treatments available at restorative bathhouses (*balnearia*).⁸ Moreover, he wrote a natural history of medical ailments, including anorexia and asthma, which he thought closely related.⁹ He served as personal physician to the Pfalz-

⁴ Ruland's early book *De Phlebotomia: Morbisque per eam currandis* (Strasbourg: Josias Riheilius, 1567) and his late work *Problemata de Ortu Anima* (Basel: n.p., 1595) both associate him with the "famous school of Lauingen."

⁵ Martin Ruland, *Formulae et Elegantiae Graecarum Locutionum et Phrasum* (Augsburg: Michael Manger, 1582); Martin Ruland, *Synonyma, seu, Copia Verborum Graecorum* (Basel: Johannes Lertout, 1585). The second work has commendatory poems by the Paracelsian scholars Michael Toxites and Siderocrates (Samuel Eisenmenger).

⁶ Martin Ruland, *Vom Wasserbaden Drei Theil* (Dillingen: Sebald Mayer, 1568; facsimile reprint Saarbrücken: Verlag Classic, 2010). Other early books by the author included an alphabetical listing of diseases and treatments: Martin Ruland, *Medicina Practica Recens et Nova* (1564; Strasbourg: Rihel, 1567). This was reprinted numerous times until at least the seventeenth century.

⁷ Martin Ruland, *Hydriatric: Aquarum Medicarum Sectiones Quatuor* (Dillingen: Sebaldus Mayer, 1568)

⁸ Martin Ruland, *Balnearium Restauratum* (Basel: Johann Georg, 1580). On the popularity and use of medical baths in sixteenth-century Germany, see Werner Heinz, "Balneologisches Wissen zwischen Antike und früher Neuzeit," *Religion und Gesundheit: Der heilkundliche Diskurs im 16. Jahrhundert*, ed. Albrecht Classen. Theophrastus Paracelsus Studien, 3 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2011), 303–22.

⁹ Martin Ruland, *Curationes Empiricae et Historicae* (1578; Basel: Henricus Petrus, 1580); reprinted in 1581 and 1593. On Ruland's understanding of *historia*, see Gianna Pomata, "The Uses of *Historia* in Early Modern Medicine," *Historia: Empiricism and Erudition in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Gianna Pomata and Nancy G. Siraisi (Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2005), 105–46; here 127.

graf (Count of the Palatinate) Philipp Ludwig (1547–1614), to whom several of his books were dedicated. Toward the end of his life, he and his son, also named Martin (1569–1611), relocated to Prague, where they served as physicians in the court of the Holy Roman Emperor Rudolf II (1552–1612) and practiced alchemy in the castle laboratories.¹⁰

As the emperor's physician, Ruland wrote a small book in German on bubonic plague in 1597, where he gave equal attention to preserving health and to combatting disease. He concluded the book with a recommended treatment using rose water.¹¹ At the same time he wrote a comprehensive book in Latin on alchemy.¹² Near his death, in 1602, he was working on his most ambitious book, a bilingual (German-Latin) lexicon of alchemical terms, including coinages of Paracelsus (1493–1541), which was completed by his son and published in 1612.¹³ The bibliographer John Ferguson noted, “He was in favour of Paracelsus' reforms, but dealt greatly in secret remedies, especially in emetics such as 'aqua benedicta,' 'aqua terrae sanctae,' and 'vinum sublimatum'" – that is, blessed water, water of the Holy Land, and sublimated wine.¹⁴

Ruland's entry on water, with seven numbered sections over three pages, shows how variously it was understood at the time.¹⁵ He begins tautologically by stating that water is liquid and a primal substance from which water can always be derived. He says this because his chief concern is not rain water from clouds (“Wolken Wasser”) but a universal water that dissolves all metals (“Catholisch Wasser / welches alle Metallen aufflöset”). From this primal water, all things get their nourishment (“Nahrung”). The nutrients are not in ordinary water. “Darumb ist unser Wasser nicht klar / und durchlichtig / sondern ist dunckel / den er ist Erde drunder” (“For our water is not clear and translucent, but dark, for the

¹⁰ See R. J. W. Evans, *Rudolf II and His World* (1973; London: Thames and Hudson, 1997), 200–05. Because Ruland's son was also named Martin, they are sometimes referred to as the elder and the younger, respectively.

¹¹ Martin Ruland, *Loimagogus: Kurzer und doch gegrundter Unterricht Regiments und Ordnunge / wie man sich in jetzt grassirenden Pestilentz leufften verhalten / praeserviren / und wie man solche eigentlich erkennen soll* (1597; Leipzig: Jacob Apel, 1607).

¹² Martin Ruland, *Progymnasmata Alchemiae, sive Problemata Chymica* (Frankfurt a. M.: Zacharius Palthenius, 1597). The final tract concerns the philosophers' stone.

¹³ Martin Ruland, *Lexicon Alchemiae, sive, Dictionarium Alchemisticarum* (Frankfurt a. M.: Zacharius Palthenius, 1612. See Thomas Willard, “Hard Places: Paracelsian Neologisms and Early Modern Guides,” *Multilingualism in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Age: Communication and Miscommunication in the Premodern World*, ed. Albrecht Classen. Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture, 17 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2016), 355–93; here 375–77.

¹⁴ John Ferguson, “*Bibliotheca Chemica*, 2 vols. (Glasgow: MacLehose, 1906), vol. 2, 303.

¹⁵ Ruland, *Lexicon Alchemiae* (see note 13), 46–48.

earth is beneath it” – that is, the elemental earth rather than the ordinary garden variety of soil. “Das Wasser ist Adam / die Erd ist Eva / unnd sind ein Leib,” he adds; “die Erd ist Eva / unnd sind ein Leib” (“The water is Adam; the earth is Eve, and they are one body”). Alchemists call this body philosophical.

This said, Ruland launches into a series of synonyms for the philosophical substance, which deserves to be quoted in full:

[Sie] heisset *urina muria*, Saltwasser / Essig / Sauerwein / lebendig Kalck / Wasser / Meerwasser / Kappes Eschen Wasser / Hefen / Calchant / Alaun / Niterwasser / Hundblum / Trackenschwantz / Seel / Wind / Luffe / Leben / die erleuchtende Gab / Mittagslicht / Jungfrawmilch / Armenisch Saltz / *sal anatron* / weisser Rauch / Schwerfelwasser roth / Diliteten Wasser / der Han / Weinstein / Saffranwasser / gebrannte Ertz / weisse composition, stinkendt Wasser / diß todten Unsauberkeit / Blut / *Mercurius* / Kolben und Alembick, *Vas Philosophorum*, der hohe Mensch / Helm. Bauch wirdts genennet im Mittel / am Ende der Fuß. Darinn wird unser Erde *calcinirt, congelirt, distillirt, subtilirt*.

[They are also called Salt Urine, Salt Water, Vinegar, Sour Wine, Living Calx, Water, Sea Water, Ashen Water, Yeast, (Calcinate), Alum, Nitric Water, Dog Bane, Dragon's Tail, Soul, Wind, Air, Life, the illuminating Gift, Broad Daylight, Virginal Milk, Armenian Salt, Salt-petre, White Smoke, Red Sulphuric Water, Gummy Water, the Male, Tartar, Saffron Water, Burnt Ore, White Composition, Putrid Water, Putrefaction of Dead Bodies, Blood, Mercury, Cucurbit, (Flask and) Alembick, Vase of the Philosophers of which the upper part is called the Grand Man, or Head-piece, the middle is called Belly, the end is called Foot. (Thereby is our Earth calcined, distilled, subtilized.)¹⁶]

As if those details are not sufficient, there are twenty-seven further varieties of waters, from *aqua alma* to *aqua vitae*, identified and defined over the next four pages.¹⁷ Here Ruland includes “Aqua Saturnina,” the iron-rich, “naturally medicated” water found in thermal springs.¹⁸ Many definitions are quoted, as was the custom,¹⁹ from older books of alchemy.

For Ruland, then “water” includes everything from acids to alkalis and bases. There are dissolving waters, like vinegar, and composite waters. Substances in suspension, such as the iron in Aqua Saturnina or the minerals in dropping water (“Aqua stillatita”), are not external to his water, but part of it. There are fetid waters and distilled waters, all of which makes for considerable uncertainty.

¹⁶ Martin Ruland, *A Lexicon of Alchemy*, ed. A. E. Waite [trans. Julius Kohn?] (London: privately printed, 1893), 33.

¹⁷ Ruland, *Lexicon Alchemiae* (see note 13), 48–51

¹⁸ Ruland, *Lexicon Alchemiae* (see note 13), 50 (“naturaliter medicatae”).

¹⁹ See, e.g., “Clangor Buccinae,” *Artis Auriferae quam chemiam vocant*, 2 vols. (Basel: Konrad Waldkirch, 1593), vol. 1, 448–544.

Chemistry for Women

At about the time that Ruland's lexicon was published, a girl was born in France who would grow up to share his passion for chemistry and medicine. Marie Meurdrac (ca. 1610–ca. 1680) was born into a military family and was married at a young age to a soldier, a member of the Paris guard of Charles de Valois, Duke of Angoulême (1573–1650). She had the good fortune to live, where her husband was stationed, at the duke's Paris residence: the Château de Grosbois, some distance southeast of Paris. The château had extensive gardens, once cultivated by monks from the Abbey of Saint Victor. It also had chemical apparatuses, which were then popular with the aristocracy. With access to both, she began to prepare cosmetics and medicines for herself, her husband and their two daughters, and her friends.²⁰

When Meurdrac entered her fifties, she began to record her many experiments so that she could remember them and share the results. Around 1662, an aristocratic friend urged her to seek a publisher, so that her experiments could reach a wider audience. She thought about it for “about two years” before deciding to make the work public. *La Chymie charitable et facile, en faveur des Dames* (“Charitable and simple chemistry, for the benefit of women”) was submitted to the Faculty of Medicine in Paris for approval, and received a note of approbation dated December 10, 1665. Ten days later, the book received a copyright (*Privilege du Roy*), and the book itself was printed in 1666, 1674, 1680, 1683, and 1687).²¹ It was translated into German (1676) and Italian (1682).

There has been some debate as to whether Marie Meurdrac was a chemist or an alchemist. She says nothing about the transmutation of metals, but seems very close to the alchemical medicine of Paracelsus, who considered transmutation to be strictly secondary to the treatment of disease.²² Her treatment of chemistry,

20 Meurdrac had a younger sister, Catherine, who was twice married and became known in widowhood as the “Woman of the Watchtower” (*Madame de la Guette*). She left a memoir that was first published in 1856 and is now considered a major source of information on the daily lives of women in the seventeenth century: *Mémoires de Madame de la Guette, 1613–1676*, ed. Micheline Cuénin (Paris: Mercure de France, 1982).

21 Marie Meurdrac, *La Chymie charitable et facile, en faveur des dames* (1666; Paris: Jean d'Hotury, 1674; facsimile edition Paris: Hachette, 2012). WorldCat mentions an edition of 1661, based on a bibliographic note, but this edition is surely a ghost.

22 Meurdrac receives acknowledgment in Allen G. Debus, *The French Paracelsians: The Chemical Challenge to Medical and Scientific Tradition in Early Modern France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 133–34. Also see Lucia Tosi, “Marie Meurdrac: Paracelsian Chemist and Feminist,” *Ambix* 48 (July 2001): 69–82.

in the book's first part, begins with chapters on salt, sulfur, and mercury, the *tria prima* or “first things” in the alchemical theory of Paracelsus – the opposing principles of mercury and sulfur identified by Jabir ibn al Hayyam, and representing the principles of volatility and fusability, respectively, to which Paracelsus added the principle of salt or embodiment to give his theory a Trinitarian turn. These three chapters are followed by a fourth on the “operations” of chemistry, starting with distillation and continuing with sublimation, rectification, calcination, putrefaction, fermentation, and other processes basic to descriptions of the alchemical opus. The first part ends with a list of the sigils used in chemistry, and especially in alchemy and astrology. In addition to the use of herbs – rosemary and lemon balm (*melissa*) for melancholy, rhubarb for digestion, and so on – she describes a syrup of mercury, made with honey, for internal use, saying that it fortifies the blood and preserves youth.²³ She does not specify the amount or kind of mercury used in the syrup, but it seems unlikely to be what kept her alive until the biblical age of three score years and ten. In the introduction to the part on cosmetics, she warns against prolonged use of mercury on the face.²⁴ In short, she accepted the innovations of Paracelsus and, like other Paracelsians, considered gold-making a strictly secondary work of alchemy. In that sense, she differed from her older contemporary Marie le Jars de Gournay, who confessed to having spent much time and money in pursuit of the *pierre philosophale*.²⁵

Meurdrac's book is organized into six separate parts, each with its own introduction. The first book covers the general principles of chemistry and the last is mainly concerned with cosmetics. The middle sections treat the vegetable, animal, and mineral kingdoms, respectively, and the useful products to be obtained from them; followed by a book on medicines prepared from them. As a result, the herbal medicines that dominated the *Pharmacopoeia Parisiensis* are given emphasis, in book 2,²⁶ while the new and controversial chemical medicine, or iatrochemistry, of Paracelsus is deemphasized, in book 5. In the fifth book, Meurdrac devotes the first chapter to twenty-four compounded waters

²³ Meurdrac, *La Chymie charitable et facile* (see note 21), 202–03.

²⁴ Meurdrac, *La Chymie charitable et facile* (see note 21), 252.

²⁵ Marie le Jars de Gournay, *Les Advis ou les preséns de la demoiselle de Gournay* (Paris: T. Du Bray, 1634), 509; discussed in Thomas Willard, “Introduction,” *Jean d'Espagnet's The Summary of Physics Restored (Enchyridion Physicae Restitutae): The 1651 Translation with d'Espagnet's Arcanum (1650)*, ed. Thomas Willard. English Renaissance Hermeticism, 7 (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1999), xv–xvi.

²⁶ Meurdrac may have drawn upon the *Codex Medicamentarius seu Pharmacopoeia Parisiensis*, ed. Philippus Harduin de Saint Jacques (Paris: O. de Varenne, 1639).

(“eaux composées”).²⁷ She starts with treatments of common complaints: headache, eye strain and inflammation, blocked tear ducts, deafness, and heart palpitations. Then after treating less common problems such as plague, she ends with women’s issues, from inducing labor to cleansing the womb and promoting lactation. From there she proceeds to syrups, infusions, and pills. The first of the syrups is one of mercury (made with wine and honey, to which she added gentian), which would have been especially controversial in her day. The Paris Faculty of Medicine had refused to recognize the validity of chemical preparations for almost a full century before finally approving an emetic using antimony in 1666, eight years after the preparation was used to treat the king and one year after Meurdrac’s book was found to contain “nothing that cannot be useful to the public” (“rien qui ne puisse estre utile au Public”).²⁸ Although both antimony (stibnite) and mercury pose health risks, the dangers of mercury are greater and the advantages lesser. Antimony remains a powerful treatment for intestinal parasites, while mercury cannot be said to have any of the advantages Meurdrac claims for it when she argues:

Ce syrop fortifie, purge, purifie le sang, & rafraichit: il conserve la jeunesse: il n'y a presque point de maladies contre lesquelles il ne serve de remede.²⁹

[This syrup fortifies, purges, and purifies the blood, and refreshes. It preserves youth. There are almost no maladies against which it does not serve as a remedy.]

Meurdrac’s book of “Chemistry for Women,” as the short title had it (*La Chymie des dames*),³⁰ was a kind of first. Hitherto, almost any such book for women was written by a man.³¹ Household books prepared by women were usually left in manuscript.³² Although Meurdrac was apologetic about her entrance into an area dominated by men, she saw no real difference between men and women, other

27 Meurdrac, *La Chymie charitable et facile* (see note 21), 186–201.

28 Debus, *The French Paracelsians* (see note 22), 188; Meurdrac, *La Chymie charitable et facile* (see note 21), signature E4v.

29 Meurdrac, *La Chymie charitable et facile* (see note 21), 203.

30 See Fig. 1: Frontispiece to the 1678 edition.

31 See, for example, Sir Hugh Plat, *Delightes for Ladies, to adorne their persons, Tables, closets and distillatories* (London: Peter Short, 1600); reprinted in 1602, 1603, 1608, 1609, 1615, 1617, 1624, 1628, 1630, 1632, 1635, 1636, 1644, 1647, 1651, 1654, and 1656.

32 The Wellcome Institute Library in London has more than 200 household books, with medicinal and culinary recipes dating back to 1600; <http://wellcomelibrary.org/collections/digital-collections/recipe-books/> (last accessed on August 13, 2015).

than the education they were given. In the preface to the first part of her book, she wrote:

Le me flattrois d'un austre costé de ce que je ne suis pas la premiere qui ait mis quelque chose sous la Presse; que les Esprits n'ont point de sexe, & que si ceux des femmes estoient cultivez comme ceux des hommes, & que l'on employast autant de temps & de dépense à les instruire, ils pourroient les égaler: que nostre siecle a veu naistre des femmes qui pour la Prose, la Poësie, les Langues, la Philosophie, & le gouvernement mesme de l'Estat, ne cedent en rien à la suffisance, & à la capacité des hommes.³³

[I flatter myself besides that I am not the first (woman) to have put something in the press; that intelligences have no sex, and that if those of women were cultivated like those of men, and if as much time and expense were given to their education, they would prove equal; that our century has seen the birth of women who in prose, poetry, language, philosophy, and government even of the state, yield nothing to the sufficiency and capacity of men.]

Meurdrac had only to add that the secrets in her book will allow women “augmenter les avantages qu'elles one receus da la Nature” (“to augment the advantages that they have received from Nature”).³⁴

The English Spa

In England, meanwhile, there was renewed interest in the warm springs, mineral springs, and holy wells that dotted the landscape. Most had been known for centuries, and some since prehistoric times; however, physicians had long regarded them as sources of contamination and dangers to public health. They routinely warned patients not to drink or bathe in water that was often frequented, while Protestant ministers mocked the superstitions associated with saints' wells and their supposed cures.

The first Englishman to write at length about the benefits of spring water was Edward Jorden (ca. 1560–1632). Trained at the famous medical academy in Padua and admitted to the elite London College of Physicians, Jorden rose to the top of his profession, attending on King James I and Queen Anne. He was known to be a rationalist, having twice testified at the trials of women accused of witchcraft, women who (he said) suffered from the illness known as hysteria. He wrote a small book on the subject, addressed to his fellow physicians in the London college and reviewing the natural causes of the supposedly supernatural posses-

³³ Meurdrac, *La Chymie charitable et facile* (see note 21), E5r.

³⁴ Meurdrac, *La Chymie charitable et facile* (see note 21), E6v.

sion that such women experience.³⁵ His only other publication grew out of several decades of practice in the historic town of Bath, where he had witnessed “the reformation of our Bathes” and the benefits of taking the waters.³⁶ The book’s title page listed the fivefold nature of his design:

first, the originall of Fountaines in generall is declared.

Then the nature and differences of Minerals, with examples of particular Bathes from most of them.

Next the generation of Minerals in the earth, from whence both the actuall heat of Bathes, and their vertues are proued to proceed.

Also by what meanes Mineral Waters are to bee examined and discouered.

And lastly, of the nature and vses of Bathes, but especially of our Bathes at BATHE in Somerset-shire.

Although the book ends with the “Bathes at Bathe,” its main focus is the chemistry and geology that makes such baths or “fountains” possible. Importantly, Jorden sets the standards for studying spa waters. He shows familiarity with bath houses on the continent and books written about them as well as new developments in chemistry. His closest affinities are with second- and third-generation Paracelsians like Petrus Severinus (1542–1602) in Denmark and Jan Baptist Van Helmont (1580–1644) in the Netherlands. In general, the Protestant states were faster to adopt the Paracelsian reforms in chemistry and medicine.³⁷

Jorden’s book set the tone for many others that followed in seventeenth-century England.³⁸ A book on spas in Yorkshire was published in 1652. There were studies of mineral waters at Latham in Lancashire (1670) and Lewisham in Kent (1674) as well as a second book on the waters at Bath (also 1674). Other studies included Sadler’s Wells (1684), Tunbridge Wells (1687), and the springs at Scarborough, on which four pamphlets were published (1660, 1669, 1672, 1680). The story

35 J. F. Payne and Michael Bevan, “Edward Jorden d. 1632,” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*; www.oxforddnb.com (last accessed on July 28, 2015).

36 Edward Jorden, *A Discourse of Naturall Bathes And Minerall Waters* (1631; London: Thomas Harper, 1632), A2v; reprinted in 1632, 1633, 1669, 1673.

37 Allen G. Debus, *The Chemical Philosophy: Paracelsian Science and Medicine in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, 2 vols. continuously paginated (New York: Science History Publications, 1977), 344–57. For changing attitudes in medicine during the Elizabethan period in the late sixteenth century, see Allen G. Debus, *The English Paracelsians* (1965; New York: Franklin Watts, 1966), 49–85. For the revival of interest in spas during the same period, see Phyllis May Hembry, *The English Spa, 1560–1815: A Social History* (London: Athlone Press, 1990), 4–20.

38 For an excellent account of these books, see Noel. G. Coley, “Cures without Care”: ‘Chymical Physicians’ and Mineral Waters in Seventeenth-Century English Medicine,” *Medical History* 23 (1979): 191–214

of Sadler's Wells says much about the new popularity of drinking spring water. The wells had once served monasteries located north of London's city walls, but were all but forgotten after the dissolution of religious houses in the early sixteenth century. The wells were rediscovered in the late seventeenth century, on the property of a man named Sadler, who took full advantage of the opportunity they provided. His house, about one mile north of the city, became a popular destination for people out for a walk or ride. In 1683, he added a music hall, which has since expanded to a theater for all the performing arts. William Hogarth's 1738 engraving "Evening" shows an unhappy family arriving at the house, while others sit in the courtyard (Fig. 2). The timid husband holds the baby, and the horns over his head, though belonging to the ox in the background, suggest the kind of problems he has. The famous water appears in the foreground.

There were similar examples of rediscovered wells throughout England. The market town of Buxton, in Derbyshire, had been the site of a Roman settlement called Aquae Arnemetiae – literally the waters of Arnemetia, a goddess whose name preserves the Celtic word *nemeton* ("sacred grove"). In 1572, a local physician wrote a pamphlet on "the auncient Bathes at Buckstones, which cureth most greuous Sicknesses."³⁹ He dedicated the book to George Talbot, the sixth Earl of Shrewsbury, who was responsible for guarding Mary Queen of Scots during her long detention in England. Shrewsbury and his wife, Bess of Hardwick, are said to have brought the exiled queen for several extended stays in Buxton, beginning in 1573. Mary, who is known to have suffered from rheumatoid arthritis and a peptic ulcer, both drank the water and bathed in it.⁴⁰ As a devout Catholic, she was only too glad to bathe in a well that was popularly associated with Saint Anne, the grandmother of Jesus.

John Speed's copperplate map of the area, dated 1610, includes a detail of Buxton in the lower right-hand corner with an enclosed building labelled "Sainte Anne's Well" and the note that it is "A Cold Well."⁴¹ Next to the well is a lodging that Jones described: "Joining to the chief springe, between the riuier [Wye] and the Bathe, is a very goodly house, four square, foure stories hye, so well compacte, with houses of office, beneath and aboue, & round about, with a great chambre, and other goodly lodgings, to the number of 30."⁴² This may be the "sanctuary"

³⁹ John Jones, *The Benefit of the auncient Bathes of Buckstones* (London: William Jones, 1572).

⁴⁰ Arthur MacNulty, "The Maladies of Mary Queen of Scots," *Medical History* 53 (July 1961): 203–09.

⁴¹ "Darbieshire described" (London: John Speede for John Sudbury, 1610).

⁴² Jones, *The Benefit* (see note 39), 3. On renewed interest in the Buxton spa, see Hembry, *The English Spa, 1560-1816* (see note 37), 21–25.

where Shrewsbury brought the exiled queen. A book on the medical benefits of well water, published in 1697, includes a dedication to William Cavendish, the second Duke of Devonshire and the great grandson of Bess of Hardwick, whose “Noble Family did formerly erect these Baths at Buxton.”⁴³ The author adds a historical note on the saint’s well:

The Heathen Priests grounded their Worshipping of Wells on the Virtue of Medicinal Waters, attributing their cheap and sudden Cures to a present Deity. The bringing Alms and Offerings to Wells, was anciently forbid by *Edgar’s Canons* This Custom was afterwards imitated by the *Romish* Priests, who dedicated the Medicinal Springs to particular Saints: So one of the Wells at Buxton is call’d St. *Ann’s*; and by the particular Offerings, Pilgrimages, and Devotions, the Common People were deceived, and attributed all their Cures to the Merit of that Saint, and their own Devotion, which was due to the Physical Virtue of cold Springs, and God’s Blessing on a Natural use of them.

The Disuse of these Waters at Buxton I believe was owing much to the Reformation, which gave a general Aversion to the *Romish* Superstition, with which the People being out of Humour, they refused the good Use, as well as the Superstition of the Baths. And that Age being very ignorant in Philosophy, they discerned not the natural Virtue of Cold Water, such as is that at *Holywell*, and St. *Mungus*, the most excellent of the Coldest Baths, and the most used to this time.⁴⁴

The author tempers his comments on superstition when he notes the current “Debauchery of Manners in such publick places.”⁴⁵ Certainly under the patronage of the Dukes of Devonshire, Buxton became a secular destination. In the eighteenth century, they erected a crescent shaped colonnade of shops similar to that in Bath. In the nineteenth century, they piped water to the town. Today the shops face a modern Saint Ann’s Well, where tourists may drink or bottle the lukewarm water (see Fig. 3). The pagan custom of “well dressing,” in which wells are decorated with flowers and embroideries, continues there as a largely secular event.⁴⁶ A similar story could be told about the iron-rich water rediscovered at Tunbridge Wells. The city became a fashionable destination for the gentry, and a shopping colonnade was erected in the manner of those at Buxton and Bath.

43 John Floyer, *An Enquiry into the Right Use and Abuses of the Hot, Cold, and Temperate Baths in England* (London: R. Clavel, 1697), A4r; italics in original.

44 Floyer, *An Enquiry* (see note 43), A7r–v; italics in the original. Floyer reprints excerpts from John Jones’s book (see note 39) with comments of his own (pages 118–35).

45 Floyer, *An Enquiry* (see note 43), A8r.

46 According to the Venerable Bede, such practices were permitted under a 601 letter from Pope Gregory; see *Historica ecclesiastica gentis anglorum* (1722; London: Sumptibus Societatis, 1738), 79–81; cap. 30.

Shortly before the waters at Tunbridge Wells were rediscovered, in 1606, two men from Yorkshire, a physician and a landowner, visited the famous baths at Spa, near the city of Liège in modern Belgium. When they drank the iron-rich or chalybeate water, which had attracted travelers since the fourteenth century, they realized that it tasted remarkably similar to that of a spring south of Knaresborough, on a commons in what is now Harrogate in North Yorkshire. The local landowner, William Slingsby or Slingesby, arranged to have the fountain properly walled and turned into a public well, and he helped to publicize its virtues. A book on the spa, published a quarter-century later, reported that Slingsby attributed his longevity to the well water:

The aboue named Gentleman did drinke the water of this Fountaine euery yeare after all his life time, for helping his infirmities, and maintaining of his he[a]lth, and would oftentimes say and auerre, that it was much better, and did excell the tart fountaines beyond the seas, as being more quicke and liuely, and fuller of minerall spirits, and sooner passing through the body.⁴⁷

The Cambridge educated physician Timothy Bright (ca. 1551–1615) first called this fountain “the English spa” in the 1590s, and not only advised others to try the water, but “himselfe also (for most part) would vse it in the Sommer season.”⁴⁸ Edmund Deane, the York physician who publicized the fountain, also mentioned “fie fountaines neare the towne” of Knaresborough, with various “minerall vertutes.”⁴⁹

Reprinted in 1649 with new observations by a York apothecary,⁵⁰ Deane’s book roused the interest of a London physician who was obliged to spend several

⁴⁷ Edmund Deane, *Spadacrene Anglicæ; Or, the English Spaw-Fountaine. Being a Briefe Treatise of the acide, or tart Fountaine in the Forest of Knaresborow* (York: John Grismond, 1626), 9. See Hembry, *The English Spa, 1560–1816* (see note 37), 50–52.

⁴⁸ Deane, *Spadacrene Anglicæ* (see note 47), 10. Bright is chiefly remembered for writing *A Treatise of Melancholie* (London: Thomas Vautrollier, 1586), considered an influence on Shakespeare’s treatment of Hamlet.

⁴⁹ Deane, *Spadacrene Anglicæ* (see note 47), 4–5.

⁵⁰ Edmund Deane, Michael Stanhope, and John Taylor, *Spadacrene Anglicæ, The English Spaw; or, The Glory of Knaresborough Springing from severall famous Fountains there adjacent, called the Vitrioll, Sulphurous, and dropping Wells; and also other Minerall Waters* (York: Thomas Broad, 1649). Stanhope had written *Newes out of York-shire: Or, an Account of a Iovrney, in the true discovery of a soueraigne Minerall, Medicinall Water, in the West-Riding of Yorke-shire* (London: George Gibbes, 1627) and *Cures without Care, or A Summons to all such who finde little or no helpe by the use of ordinary physick to repaire to the Northerne Spaw* (London: William Jones, 1632). It should be noted that some areas once in Yorkshire’s West Riding area are now in the county of North Yorkshire.

weeks in Yorkshire. John French (ca. 1616–1657) had not completed his medical studies at Oxford when the First Civil War broke out, between forces loyal to the King and to Parliament, in 1642. Urged by his mentor, Lord Saye and Sele of the castle in his hometown of Broughton, in Oxfordshire, he joined the Parliamentary army as a physician. After the war ended, in 1646, he was assigned to the Savoy Hospital in London. Created by Henry VII, it had been requisitioned by Parliament in 1642 for the treatment of wounded soldiers.⁵¹ He completed his medical studies and received his Oxford M.D. in 1648. He then applied for admission to the College of Physicians, but war broke out again before he could write the entrance examination and he was never admitted. Instead he was appointed head of the newly created hospital for veterans at Ely House in London, where he experimented with new therapies. He took special interest in the use of mineral waters, notably the waters from Epsom with their famous salts, which first drew notice in the previous century.⁵² He now had a laboratory and studied the latest developments in chemistry and especially in distillation, on which he wrote a book.⁵³ He maintained that the medically useful mineral waters from Epsom and Tunbridge Wells could be replicated in a good chemistry lab,⁵⁴ where he followed the “spagyric” model of Paracelsus.⁵⁵ He had written the preface to the first English translation of the *Corpus Hermeticum*, in which he expressed the hope that Paracelsus and Hermes Trismegistus would soon be accorded the same respect as

⁵¹ Built on the site of John of Gaunt's London residence, which was burned down during the Peasants' Revolt of 1381, the Savoy was pulled down and replaced in the early eighteenth century. On the innovations of such hospitals, see Eric Gruber von Arni, “Tempora mutantur et nos mutamur in illis”: The Experience of Sick and Wounded Soldiers during the English Civil Wars and Interregnum,” *The Impact of Hospitals, 300–2000*, ed. John Henderson, Peregrine Horden, and Allesandro Pastore (Oxford and New York: Peter Lang, 2007), 317–40.

⁵² Peter Elmer, “French, John (c. 1616–1657),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*; www.oxforddnb.com (last accessed on Aug. 14, 2015). Details of his contact with the scientific reformer Samuel Hartlib appear in Charles Webster, *The Great Instauration: Science, Medicine, and Reform, 1626–1660* (London: Duckworth; New York: Holmes & Meier, 1976).

⁵³ John French, *The Art of Distillation; or, A Treatise of the Choicest Spagyrically Preparations, Performed by way of Distillation* (London: Tho[mas] Williams, 1651); reprinted in 1653, 1664, and 1667. As was common practice, books printed toward the end of the year were often given the next year's date. The London stationer George Thomason received his copy (British Library shelfmark E. 619.5) on October 7, 1650.

⁵⁴ French, *The Art of Distillation* (see note 53), 160–62.

⁵⁵ The book's subtitle promised “spagyric” preparations, using a coinage of Paracelsus from the Greek words meaning “to separate” and “to collect.” French discusses two elixirs of Paracelsus (45, 188) as well as the famed homunculus (114).

Galen and Hippocrates.⁵⁶ He also translated the latest work of Johannes Glauber (ca. 1604–1670), an innovator with chemical apparatuses,⁵⁷ as well as the esoteric texts of Agrippa,⁵⁸ Paracelsus, and Sendivogius.⁵⁹

In 1651, two years after the execution of Charles I, in January 1649, French was sent on a mission to Yorkshire, where the parliamentary army had sacked a castle once used as a royalist stronghold and long held to be impregnable. He welcomed the opportunity to attend to troops in Knaresborough, because the castle was near the famous spa about which Deane had written. He had read Jorden's more scientific study of the geothermal springs at Bath as well as the latest study of the original Spa on the continent.⁶⁰

In the preface to his study of “the York-shire Spaw,” printed in 1652, French remarked:

I Being the last year commanded by my occasions down to the Spaw in York-shire, was desirous to improve my time in applying my self to experiment, & observation: to the one for the discovery of the true causes of those Famous Medicinal waters of *Knares-borow*: to the other, to be convinced what real effects they wrought upon the drinkers thereof. And this I had leisure, beyond expectation, to do, being prevented from my intended, and speedier return, by reason of the then Northen distractions.⁶¹

⁵⁶ J. F., “To the Reader,” *The Divine Pymander of Hermes Mercurius Trismegistus*, trans. John Everard (London: Tho[mas] Brewster and Greg[ory]. Moule, 1650), A2r–A7v. Thomason dated his personal copy (British Library shelfmark E. 1344 [2]) September 25, 1649. The preface is reprinted in *The Alchemy Reader*, ed. Stanton J. Linden (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 208–10.

⁵⁷ John Rudolph Glauber, *A Description of New Philosophical Furnaces; or, The Art of Distilling Divided into Five Parts*, trans. J[ohn] F[rench] (London: Tho[mas] Williams, 1651). The translation is made from Glauber's *Furni Novi Philosophici; Oder, Beschreibung einer New-erfundenen Distillir-Kunst* (Amsterdam: Johan Fabel, 1648).

⁵⁸ Henry Cornelius Agrippa, *Three Books of Occult Philosophy*, trans. J[ohn] F[rench] (London: Gregory Moule, 1651). Thomason received his copy (British Library shelfmark E. 617[1]) on November 24, 1650. Agrippa's book includes a chapter on water and the power of springs where the elements merge: bk. 1, ch. 6; 11–14. “to augment the advantages that they have received from Nature.”

⁵⁹ Paracelsus, *Of the Nature of Things: Nine Books*, trans. John French (London: Tho. Williams, 1650); bound with Michael Sendivogius, *The New Light of Alchymie*, trans. J[ohn] F[rench] (London: Tho[mas] Williams, 1650).

⁶⁰ Henri de Heer, *Spadacrene; hoc est, Fons Spadanus, accuratissime descriptus* (Leiden: Franciscus Moriadnus and Adrianus Weyngarden, 1645); cited in French, *The Art of Distillation* (see note 53), 150.

⁶¹ John French, *The York-shire Spaw, Or a Treatise Of foure Famous medicinal Wells, viz the Spaw, or Vitrioline-Well; the stinking, or Sulphur-Well; the Dropping, or Petrifying-Well; and S. Magnus-Well, near Knaresborow in York-Shire. Together With the causes, vertues, and use thereof*

The various “springs” or “fountains” were located south of the ruined castle, across the River Nidd. Closest to the river was a “dropping” or “petrifying” spring whose water had so much mineral content that it could completely coat things dropped there, making them seem to be turned into stone. Indeed, in the previous century the local prophetess known as Mother Shipton had done business out of a nearby cave, using the water’s “petrifying” quality as proof of her own power.⁶² The famous spa, known to locals as the Tewitt Well, was located some three miles south of the castle, in a commons still called the Stray. Along the way were several sulfur springs, known to locals as “stinking” springs for their strong smell of sulfur and brimstone. French proposed to visit all of these as well as a famous holy well near the village of Copgrove, some five miles north of the castle. He said it was associated with Saint “*Magnus*, or *Mugnus*,” but could not determine whether that was the original name.⁶³

In the preface, French admitted that he found the waters less helpful to soldiers than he hoped. He gave several possible explanations, including the diet and prejudices of individual spa-goers. He dedicated the tract to the distinguished physician Theodore de Mayerne (1573–ca. 1655).⁶⁴ This Swiss physician had brought chemical cures into the London pharmacopeia and had become a member of the London College of Physicians as well as the College of Physicians in Paris.⁶⁵ French greeted him with a title sometimes used of Paracelsus: “the monarch of physicians” (“medicorum Monarchum”).

At 125 pages, French’s study of spas was four times as long as Edmund Deane’s, and far more comprehensive. It was written in plain language – “as

(1652; London: Nathaniel Brooke, 1654), 4. Later “revis’d by one who has received great benefit by using the waters” and reprinted as John French, *A Pocket Companion for Harrowgate Spaw; or, A Particular Account of the Several Medicinal Springs at, or near that Place* (Bradford [West Yorkshire]: J. Wood, 1760)

62 Richard Head, *The Life and Death of Mother Shipton* (London: B. Harris, 1677); Arnold Kellett, “Mother Shipton (*supp[osed]*. fl. 1530),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, www.oxforddnb.com (last accessed on May 15, 2015).

63 French, *The York-shire Spaw* (see note 61), 119. The well was probably connected to the cult of the sixth-century preacher known as Saint Mungo, and was likely used in pre-Christian Britain. It was said to help those with rickets. “A Letter from Dr. Clayton, concerning the Virtues of St. *Mungus* Well, near Knaresborough in Yorkshire” is included in Floyer, *An Enquiry* (see note 40), 113–17.

64 With professional connections in both Paris and London, where he treated kings, Mayerne was an important voice for sanity in medicine. He is the subject of a major biography by Hugh Trevor Roper, *Europe’s Physician: The Various Life of Theodore de Mayerne*, ed. Blair Worden (New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 2006).

65 Debus, *The English Paracelsians* (1965; New York: Franklin Watts, 1966), 150–56.

clear,” he claimed, “as the glasses themselves wherein the waters are drunk.”⁶⁶ From an introductory chapter on Yorkshire, it moved on to chapters about the origin of springs, the variety of wells with both plain or “simple” waters and mineral waters. For French, water was one of the four elements, but some water was enriched by mineral content. Mineral water was distinct on several grounds: “strange” colors, tastes, odors, sounds, and weights. He also noted strange “observation of times,” such as rivers that do not flow on Sundays, and “strange effects,” such as: “The River Styx [which] kills all them that drink of it, as is agreed by all Historians.”⁶⁷ He discussed the relative advantages of bathing in water that is hot or cold and of drinking chilled or heated water. He showed the Englishman’s belief in the bracing effects of cold water; he even reported that Francis Bacon thought it led to long life, failing to note that the Lord Chancellor was said to have died after experimenting with snow.⁶⁸ Nevertheless, he did English schoolboys the good service of advising, on the authority of Galen, that cold water be avoided with children because it can cause them to convulse.⁶⁹

After a chapter on the various kinds of mineral water, French devoted four chapters to the famous spa at Knaresborough (north Yorkshire), including the kind of water found there and directions for taking the water, with precautions, diet, exercise, and the time of year to visit. He followed Deane in describing the iron-rich water at Knaresborough as “vitrioline,” meaning that it had the properties of vitriol, and very likely of a sulfate of iron such as has been used to treat anemia.⁷⁰ He identified the waters that locals called “stinking” as rich in sulfur. Finally, at the holy well, he noted that “*Dr. Dean*, will not have any greater vertues attributed to it, than to common Springs.” He took this to indicate that Deane belonged to the reformed religion. Though he could not detect mineral traces himself, he did not conclude with Deane that the well had no healing virtue. He noted rather “that waters oftentimes are impregnated with mineral vertues, and spirits to[o], though insensibly,” that is, unnoticed by the five senses. He asked: “... must we always judge of things by sense, and not sometimes by effects?”⁷¹ Although he did not belong to the old religion himself, he had nothing against those that did, so long as they lived “according to their own light, and within

⁶⁶ French, *The York-shire Spaw* (see note 61), A8r.

⁶⁷ French, *The York-shire Spaw* (see note 61), 33–39.

⁶⁸ John Aubrey, *Aubrey’s Brief Lives: A Selection*, ed. Richard Barber (London: Folio Society, 1975), 39. Aubrey received the information from Thomas Hobbes.

⁶⁹ French, *The York-shire Spaw* (see note 61), 42.

⁷⁰ Deane, *Spadacrene Anglica* (see note 47), 10. See *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, www.oed.com, “vitriol,” noun (last accessed on Aug. 14, 2015).

⁷¹ French, *The York-shire Spaw* (see note 61), 120.

the bounds of civility." Therefore, he concluded, "if it were but their faith in the water, and strong imagination, (as some may say) that cured them, yet let them use this water, or any lawfull means else that may exalt their imagination, if that may promote their cures."⁷²

French worked with a spirit of adventure. He described eleven "experiments" he performed at the "stinking" springs:

1. If Silver be put into this water, it is thereby tinged first yellow, and then black, but Gold is not all discoloured thereby.
2. If this water be a little boiled, it looseth its tinging property, and also stinking odour.
3. It coagulates milk, if it be boiled therewith.
4. The distilled water thereof looseth its odour and doth not coagulate milk.
5. If the water be boiled, it will still coagulate milk, though it looseth its odour.
6. Seven gallons yield by evaporation a pound of Salt, which though at first black, I have made as white as snow.
7. This Salt coagulates milk also.
8. This water kills worms, and such kind of creatures presently, if they be put therein.
9. I filled two Vial glasses with this water in wet weather, and stopt the one, but the other I left open. The water in that which was stopt, within an hour, or two, became white, and thick, and within two, or three dayes deposited a white sediment, and the sides of that glass were furred, the water in the other glass altered not.
10. I filled two Vial glasses in fair weather, whereof the one I stopt, but the other left open, the water in neither of them turned colour any whit considerably, onely a kind of a thin whitish matter, after two, or three dayes fell to the bottom, the water continuing very clear. The water of that glass which was stopt, retained its odour most.
11. A pint of this water weighs two scruples, i. e. fourty grains more than a pint of common Spring-water.⁷³

Except for the last item, his field tests were qualitative rather than quantitative, based on what could be seen by the naked eye or detected by other senses.

French died before he could do much to build on his work with mineral waters, whether in the field or in the hospital. Asked to serve again as physician to the army of Parliament in what is sometimes called the Third Civil War – really a proxy war between Catholic and Protestant forces in the Netherlands, respectively loyal to Charles II and Oliver Cromwell – he was wounded in the field and died near Boulogne in 1657. He was only forty years old with many translations to his credit. He had also prepared the first glossary of Paracelsian terminolo-

⁷² French, *The York-shire Spaw* (see note 61), 123–24. Paracelsus emphasized the importance of imagination in medical treatment.

⁷³ French, *The York-shire Spaw* (see note 61), 109–10.

gy.⁷⁴ The dedications and complimentary verses in those volumes show that he was well connected with others who looked for innovations in science and medicine. He knew the scientific organizer Samuel Hartlib (ca. 1600–1662), who seems to have thought him an authority on the minerals and ores in England.⁷⁵ A few younger contemporaries took note of his work, and so have modern scholars.⁷⁶

Acids, Alkalies, and the Universal Solvent

Had he lived, French might have been drawn into discussion in the Royal Society of London, the first official scientific society in England, founded shortly after the restoration of the monarchy in 1660. Then again, his Parliamentarian leanings might have kept him out. He would certainly have followed the reports of its chemical debates. Some people wondered, for example, whether the fire used to heat water in the distillation process, on which French had written at length, did not change the composition of water. Others wanted to know what lay on either side of distilled water, in the “two waters” which Ruland called the solvent and composite, meaning “acid” and “alkali” (later “base”).

The distinction had been around for centuries. An acid (from Latin *acere* ‘to be sour’) has the power to dissolve, and the famed *aqua regia* (“royal water”) was so called because it could dissolve gold, the king of metals. An alkali (from Arabic *al quily* “the soda ash” or potash) can neutralize an acid, sometimes forming a soap or another water soluble base. Though typically produced by calcinating plants, alkalies also occur in nature as mineral rich soil or water. Attempts to understand the interaction of acids and alkalies increased in the seventeenth century, as scientists learned more about the digestive process in animals and effervescence in general. They only intensified with the ongoing dream of a universal solvent, which Paracelsus called the alkahest and his Flemish follower Jan

⁷⁴ J[ohn] F[rench], *A Chymicall Dictionary Explaining Hard Places and Words met withall in the writings of Paracelsus, and other obscure authors*; bound with Michael Sendivogius, *The New Light of Alchymie*, trans. J[ohn] F[rench] (London: Tho[mas] Williams, 1650); reprinted in 1674.

⁷⁵ Samuel Hartlib, “Ephemerides,” June-July 1648, 31/22/32B. Cited by Elmer, “French, John” (see note 52), the diary entry may report Hartlib’s opinion of French or French’s of his friend Hamilton. The Hartlib papers are accessible online at www.hrionline.ac.uk/hartlib (last accessed on Aug. 14, 2015).

⁷⁶ Coley, “Cures without Care” (see note 38). Also see Hembry, *The English Spa, 1560–1815* (see note 37), and Anna Marie Roos, *The Salt of the Earth: Natural Philosophy, Medicine, and Chymistry in England, 1650–1750*. History of Science and Medicine Library, 3 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2007).

Baptist Van Helmont (1580–1644) identified with nitrates and sometimes called a kind of hellish, or “Gehennical” fire. French referred to Helmont’s “opinion ... that with his Altahest [sic] all stones, and indeed all things may be turned into water.”⁷⁷

For Robert Boyle (1627–1691), the alkahest was especially fascinating, for it raised the possibility of a scientific link to the dreams of the alchemists.⁷⁸ A recent discovery in the Royal Society’s archives has shown that one of the first papers Boyle read there, in 1661, was on the alkahest.⁷⁹ Entitled “An experiment that is seen to show that the liquid known as the Alchahest has a counterpart in animals” (“Experimentum quod ostendere videtur, Liquorem quondam Alkahesto analogum in Animalibus reperiri”), it reported that something very like the so-called “liquor alkahest” was found in the lymphatic system of animals. Boyle was among the Society’s youngest members, barely past thirty, but had spent the last decade in the company of chemists and alchemists. Independently wealthy and with no family obligations, he had become a patron to several of them, including Walter Charleton, a proponent of the “corpuscular” theory of matter,⁸⁰ and the American alchemist George Starkey.⁸¹ A fellow member of the Royal Society wrote of Boyle that “he will not spare for cost to get any rare secret.”⁸² The alkahest, and beyond it the analysis of water with its acids and bases, touched on the very issue of chemical composition,⁸³ on which Boyle spent so much effort.

The newly discovered essay shows that Boyle had his detractors, which seems appropriate for the young author of *The Sceptical Chymist*.⁸⁴ Some doubted that a body could contain anything like a universal solvent; after all, the body would soon turn to water. While water pervades the human body – skin, bones, and

⁷⁷ French, *The Art of Distillation* (see note 53), 107. French’s is the earliest known use of the term in English.

⁷⁸ Lawrence M. Principe, *The Aspiring Adept: Robert Boyle and his Alchemical Quest* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998), 19 and *passim*.

⁷⁹ Ana Maria Alfonso-Goldfarb, Márcia Helena Mendes Ferraz, and Piyo M. Rattansi, “Lost Royal Society Documents on ‘Alkahest’ (Universal Solvent) Rediscovered,” *Notes and Records of the Royal Society* 64.4 (Dec. 2010): 435–56.

⁸⁰ Emily Booth, “A Subtle and Mysterious Machine”: *The Medical World of Walter Charleton (1619–1707)*. Studies in History and Philosophy of Science, 18 (Dordrecht: Springer, 2005).

⁸¹ William R. Newman, *Gehennical Fire: The Lives of George Starkey, an American in the Scientific Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999).

⁸² Aubrey, *Aubrey’s Brief Lives* (see note 68), 55.

⁸³ See Marie Boas, *Robert Boyle and Seventeenth-Century Chemistry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1958), 108–41.

⁸⁴ See George Sarton, “Boyle and Boyle, the Sceptical Chemist and the Sceptical Historian,” *Chymia* 3 (1950): 155–89.

muscles – it accounts for only about forty percent of the body's chemical make-up. Had Borges known about Boyle's paper, as he did about the palingenesis of roses associated with Paracelsus,⁸⁵ he might have written a strange tale about the disappearance of Robert Boyle, Esq.

Boyle's skepticism was directed at "the Generality of Alchymists," as he said on the title page of his first book, and especially at their "hypostatical" principles. By this he meant their belief in what Paracelsus called the *tria prima* or first things: the trinity of salt, mercury, and sulfur in which salt gave things embodiment, mercury, volatility, and sulfur, fusibility. Whereas Paracelsus wanted a specifically Christian and Trinitarian cosmology, outlined in his tract of "Philosophy for the Athenians,"⁸⁶ Boyle reflected the newer tendency to separate science and religion. Boyle was as convinced a Christian as Paracelsus, and considerably more orthodox in his Protestant faith. He was given to meditation on the glory of God as found in ordinary "reflections" such as "Seeing a Child picking the Plums out of a piece of Cake his Mother had given him for Breakfast" or "Roses and Tulips growing near one another."⁸⁷ His main objection to the Paracelsians or spagyristas was that, for all their supposed modernity, they were just as given to deductive reasoning as the ancients, therefore just as lacking in inductive thinking and close observation.

Boyle had doubts about the analysis of mineral waters for two reasons. It seemed to him, first of all, that minerals suspended in a solution might not be properly detected. He also thought that alkalis could escape water and reach into the air. With a younger member of the Royal Society, Daniel Coxe, M.D. (1640–1730), Boyle studied mineral waters off and on for many years while working principally with air. Late in life, he wrote up his observations without reference to other studies and with considerable apology. In the introductory "Advertisement of the Publisher," probably written by Coxe, the reader is advised that Boyle did not intend his work to replace that of other authorities on mineral water, but simply offered "Memoirs ... of what had occur'd to him of his own Observa-

⁸⁵ Jorge Luis Borges, "Paracelsus and the Rose," trans. Thomas di Giovanni, *The Antioch Review* 50.1/2 (Winter-Spring 1992): 395–98; originally published in Jorge Luis Borges, *La Rosa de Paracelso: Tigres azules* (Madrid: Swan, 1986).

⁸⁶ Paracelsus, *Philosophia ad Athenienses: Drey Bücher* (Cologne: Arnold Byrkmann, 1564).

⁸⁷ Robert Boyle, *Occasional Reflections upon Several Subjects* (1665; Oxford and London: John Henry Parker, 1848), 340–44, 359–61. The first reflection is presented in the dialogue form used throughout Boyle's *Sceptical Chymist*. The tendency to reflect on everyday subjects, led to lampoons by Samuel Butler and Jonathan Swift.

tion and Experiments.”⁸⁸ Boyle’s own “Advertisement” states that he planned to expand his notes, but became caught up with work “*that concerned him more than the Scrutiny of Mineral Waters could.*”⁸⁹

Boyle may have been drawn to the study of mineral water by his long-standing interest in salts, which he suspected to have semi-magical qualities. His younger colleague Martin Lister (1637–1712) had written a book on fountains that drew older studies into question. For example, he wrote that what French called the “stinking” springs near Knaresborough, contained no sulfur that he could detect, but only salt.⁹⁰ Boyle suggested that many such waters are “manifestly *Bituminous.*”⁹¹ However, he did not doubt the presence of salt, for he had not found a single spring to be “devoid of common Salt.”⁹² He also looked for special kinds of salt. Indeed, one of his tests for any mineral water was whether the “chimeys or vents” of any underground water show signs of “a Salt like Sal-Armoniac, or some other Mineral Exhalations in a dry form.”⁹³ Sal ammoniac, now known as ammonium chloride (NH_4Cl), was a common candidate for the elusive alkahest, the universal solvent.⁹⁴ Boyle also mentioned a salt that another member of the Royal Society found at a spring in the west of England, which he had identified as “the *Sal mirabili Glauberi*,” or Glauber’s miracle salt; this was an early name for sodium sulfate (Na_2SO_4), another candidate for the alkahest.⁹⁵

Boyle’s interest in finding a universal solvent had, in common with many wild-goose chases in chemistry, a positive side-effect. Realizing that common “saline liquors” differed from Helmont’s alkahest, Boyle devised tests to classify

88 Robert Boyle, *Short Memoirs for the Natural Experimental History of Mineral Waters* (London: Samuel Smith, 1685), A2r. The “publisher,” in the word’s original sense of the person who made the writing public, was in all likelihood Boyle’s friend Dr. Robert Coxe. Boyle stated that he wrote the last section, on the medicinal uses of mineral water, for “the ingenious Dr. that set me upon this task” (A4r; mislabeled A3r).

89 Boyle, *Short Memoirs* (see note 88), A3r; italics in original.

90 Martin Lister, *De Fontibus Medicatis Angliae Exercitatio* (1682; London: Walter Kettily, 1684), 34. On page 39, Lister later mentions his “good friend Frencius,” whom Roos takes to be John French; see *The Salt of the Earth* (see note 75), 234, n. 57. The identification seems improbable, as Lister (1639–1712) was only seventeen when French died.

91 Boyle, *Short Memoirs* (see note 88), 75.

92 Boyle, *Short Memoirs* (see note 88), 80.

93 Boyle, *Short Memoirs* (see note 88), 19.

94 Maurice Pierre Crosland, *Historical Studies in the Language of Chemistry*. Heinemann Books on the History of Science (London: Heinemann; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962), 82.

95 Boyle, *Short Memoirs* (see note 88), 93; Glauber’s salt is treated at length in his *New Philosophical Furnaces* (see note 57); also see Roos, *The Salt of the Earth* (see note 76), 41.

such “liquors.” Because they all derived from salts, he created what would now be called “Ph indicators” to determine which were acidic (e.g., nitric acid; HNO_3), which “urinary” or neutral (e.g., sal ammoniac; NH_4Cl), and which alkaline (e.g., sodium carbonate; Na_2CO_3).⁹⁶ Since the Middle Ages, alchemists had used lichen (Latin *litmus*) for such tests. With a low Ph, they turn red; with a high Ph, blue. Boyle found that paper soaked in a “Syrup of Violets” would change color when drops of different kinds of water were added to it.

One scholar has counted eighteen separate tests in Boyle’s *Memoirs*, some with multiple stages; for example, there are eleven measures for common salt.⁹⁷ Three of the tests involve measurements made possible by recent inventions or improvements on older inventions: the thermoscope to measure the “degree of Coldness or Heat,”⁹⁸ the hydrometer to measure “the Specific Gravity,”⁹⁹ and the microscope to look for infusoria, “little Animals frisking up and down.”¹⁰⁰ Boyle attributed the microscope to “the ingenious, Mr. Lewenhoek,” i.e., Antoine van Leeuwenhoek (1632–1723), while the thermoscope he used was perfected by the Magdeburg scientist and city mayor Otto von Guericke (1602–1668), and the hydrometer, used to measure the density of a fluid, was his own device, first described in a presentation to the Royal Society in 1675.¹⁰¹ (Earlier hydrometers were devised by Hypatia of Alexandria in the early fifth century and the Afghan scientist Abū Rayhān al-Bīrūnī in the eleventh century.)¹⁰² Despite the improvements in measurement, however, Boyle’s tests were primarily qualitative, based on observation. Boyle is sometimes called the father of qualitative chemistry, but it would take another century of innovation before quantitative chemistry could emerge with Lavoisier and others.

As with many episodes in the history of science, there was irony in Boyle’s contribution to the analysis of water. First of all, his main concern was with gas; Boyle’s law, for which he is known to every student of chemistry, concerns the relation of a gas’s pressure and volume. His work with water grew out of his study

⁹⁶ Roos, *The Salt of the Earth* (see note 76), 111.

⁹⁷ Coley, “Cures without Care” (see note 38), 208.

⁹⁸ Boyle, *Short Memoirs* (see note 88), 64.

⁹⁹ Boyle, *Short Memoirs* (see note 88), 67.

¹⁰⁰ Boyle, *Short Memoirs* (see note 88), 72.

¹⁰¹ The *Oxford English Dictionary* (see note 70), “gravity,” noun II 4c gives the first instance of this term as a paper that Boyle read to the Royal Society in 1666.

¹⁰² Wikipedia, “hydrometer,” <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hydrometer> (last accessed on Aug. 14, 2015).

of volatile salts like sal ammoniac.¹⁰³ He suspected that salts released from water had special potency. Like Glauber, he thought that such salts might be the key to the secret alkahest of Van Helmont. Thus Boyle studied impurities in water as he searched for the universal solvent. Here was the great irony.

As it turned out, water itself – pure water, the *Wolcken Wasser* of Ruland – is the closest thing on earth to the fabled alkahest. According to the U.S. Geological Survey, “it dissolves more substances than any other liquid.”¹⁰⁴

Composition and Decomposition

Antoine Lavoisier (1743–1794) is commonly said to be the first to analyze water into its constituent parts. The claim is sometimes disputed, for other chemists were involved in debate as to whether water was an element *proprement dit*, an indissoluble substance rather than a compound of some sort. However, Lavoisier worked on the problem with a care and a power of observation rarely matched in the history of science. Much as Boyle had reported his experiments in the *Proceedings* of the Royal Society of London, founded in 1661, Lavoisier reported his experiments, as memoirs, to the Académie des Sciences in Paris, founded in 1666. He chose his words carefully and indeed helped to set the terms for discussion of chemical reactions.¹⁰⁵ He also took on the terminology of chemistry, proposing a new chemical nomenclature.¹⁰⁶

Lavoisier began with the simple question, can one element be turned into another?¹⁰⁷ Boyle thought he had demonstrated that water was turned into wood

103 Robert Boyle, *Tracts: Containing I. Suspicions about some Hidden Qualities of the Air ...* (London: Pitt, 1674); see Roos, *The Salt of the Earth* (see note 76), 7.

104 U. S. Geological Survey, “The USGS Water Science School,” <https://water.usgs.gov/edu/qa-solvent.html> (last accessed on Aug. 14, 2015).

105 See Wilda C. Anderson, *Between the Library and the Laboratory: The Language of Chemistry in Eighteenth-Century France* (Baltimore, MD, and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984), 73–146.

106 Antoine Lavoisier, *Méthode de nomenclature chimique* (Paris: Cuchet, 1789).

107 Scholarship on Lavoisier is considerable. I have consulted Henry Guerlac, *Lavoisier, the Crucial Year: The Background and Origin of His First Experiments on Combustion in 1772* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1961); Frederic Lawrence Holmes, *Antoine Lavoisier – the Next Crucial Year: The Sources of His Quantitative Method in Chemistry* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998); Jean-Pierre Poirier, *Lavoisier: Chemist, Biologist, Economist*, trans. Rebecca Balinski (1993; Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998).

or plant fiber when absorbed by a tree or plant.¹⁰⁸ Others had found that, when water was boiled for a long period, a solid formed on its surface. To their eyes, the water was transmuted into a different substance. Lavoisier studied the notes on their experiments and reached a different hypothesis, that they had not made adequate measurements. He undertook to replicate the experiment with boiling water under the strictest control. He placed a carefully weighed quantity of distilled water in a closed vessel called a pelican, made from fired clay. The pelican was so named because it had tubes on either side, resembling the beaks of birds, through which vapors could rise and descend (Fig. 4). He also weighed the pelican itself. Then he heated the water, using the slow heat from water boiled in an open vessel known as a *bain-marie*. (This was the *balneum mariae*, named after Maria Hebraica, the teacher of the early-fourth-century alchemist Zosimos.) He applied the heat for three months, one hundred days and a day. Then he weighed everything. The residue in the pelican weighed slightly more than the distilled water, but the extra weight was exactly equal to the weight lost by the pelican. A small amount of clay had been absorbed in the residue.¹⁰⁹

Having shown that water could not be turned into something else, Lavoisier then sought to see whether it could be decomposed into other substances. He knew that, in studies of fire on which he too had worked, Joseph Priestley (1733–1804) had isolated the gas that Lavoisier called oxygen, in 1774. He also knew that oxygen had an affinity for certain substances such as iron. In another experiment, carried out a decade after the one in the pelican, he first subjected pure water in a flask to high heat, then allowed the steam to condense. The reconstituted water at the end of the experiment weighed the same as the water he started with; therefore, he concluded that there had been a physical change of state, from water to steam, but no chemical change. In a second experiment, he placed an iron bar under the water and again subjected the vessel to high heat. This time, the water weighed less after it had boiled and condensed because some of it had become attached to the iron, which gained comparably in weight. He concluded that this time a chemical change had occurred. Lavoisier referred to the remaining fluid as “decomposed” water. To secure his case, he conducted a

¹⁰⁸ Robert Boyle, *The Sceptical Chymist; or, Chymico-Physical Doubts & Paradoxes* (London: J. Crooke, 1661), 106–12. See Charles Webster, “Water as the Ultimate Principle of Nature: The Background to Boyle’s *Sceptical Chymist*,” *Ambix* 13 (1965): 96–107; also see Michael T. Walton, “Boyle and Newton on the Transmutation of Water and Air,” *Ambix* 27 (1980): 11–18.

¹⁰⁹ Leon M. Lederman with Dick Tersi, *The God Particle: If the Universe Is the Answer, What Is the Question?* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1993), 109–10.

third experiment using copper instead of iron, and found that the water remained undisturbed because no chemical change had occurred.¹¹⁰

Lavoisier did not yet know the actual content of this substance, but soon discovered it. He invented a chemical apparatus that allowed him to mix gases from two different jets. At one point, in 1784, he tried a mixture of oxygen and hydrogen, which the English chemist Henry Cavendish (1731–1810) had isolated, in 1766, and had named “inflammable air.” Lavoisier expected the mixture to be a kind of acid, but found it was pure water. He called it a “composed” water. It remained for him to test the relative weight of the two gases and make many calculations before determining that water as we know it is composed of two parts hydrogen to each part of oxygen.

Presenting his findings to the Académie des Sciences in 1781, Lavoisier concluded “that water is not at all simple substance, properly called an element, but that it is susceptible to decompstion and recomposition” (“que l'eau n'est point une substance simple, un élément proprement dit, mais quelle est susceptible de décomposition et de recomposition”).¹¹¹ Before his achievement was recognized, he was guillotined during the Reign of Terror that followed the French Revolution in 1794. It was thanks to the efforts of his widow, who attended his experiments and made careful drawings of his equipment, that his name was cleared and his fame established.

Conclusion

When Martin Heidegger lectured about the Neoplatonic philosophers Parmenides and Heraclitus, he pointed out the difficulty of understanding how the story of philosophy started when one is living toward its end.¹¹² It is difficult in the age of Nobel Prizewinners in Chemistry, Physics, and the other sciences to understand the first speculations about matter, let alone to understand how a writer as obvi-

110 For a contemporary account of Lavoisier's first experiments with water, see *Histoire de l'Académie Royale des Sciences. Anné M.DCCLXX* (Paris: Gabriel Martin et al., 1773)., 5–7. <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k3568x/f1.image> (last accessed on Aug. 15, 2015).

111 Quoted from the title of his *mémoire* on the subject, published in 1783 and available at the website Oeuvres de Lavoisier, http://www.lavoisier.cnrs.fr/ice/ice_page_detail.php?lang=fr&type=text&bdd=lavoisier&table=Lavoisier&bookId=39&typeofbookDes=&pageOrder=1&facsimile=off&search=no (last accessed on Aug. 14, 2015).

112 Martin Heidegger, *Parmenides*, trans. André Schuwer and Richard Rojcewicz (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1992), 2, 10–11.

ously educated and experienced as Martin Ruland could have devoted so much energy to pseudoscientific thought with no clear advantages.

Heidegger offered the interesting possibility that some thinkers are not concerned with facts about nature, but with being itself; and in specific with truth in the literal sense of Greek *alethea*, which he construed as “un-concealedness.”¹¹³ Whereas Ruland simply made notes from his extensive reading, Meurdrac tried to reproduce procedures she came across, while French and Boyle devised qualitative field tests of waters they found, and Lavoisier had the equipment to make the quantitative tests on which modern chemistry largely rests.

Heraclitus famously said that “one cannot step in the same river twice,” that is, that the river is always changing and never the same.¹¹⁴ Like Empedocles, he was interested in the unrepeatable experience in the flow of nature, while the early modern chemists, from at least Meurdrac on, sought repeatable results. Ruland, in his entry on “Chemia,” states that chemistry is the art of separating natural substances into their constituent parts and subtly preparing artificial “magisteries” (“Chemia est ars separandi, ex quolibet mixto essentias, concin-
nandique magisteria artificium”).¹¹⁵ The chemical magistry is a secret, like the Philosophers’ Stone, learned only by the will of God and therefore incapable of being replicated in any laboratory.¹¹⁶ Meurdrac makes no mention of secrets, but affirms “that everything I teach is true, and that all my remedies were tested” (“que tout ce que j’ enseigne est veritable, & que tous mes remedes sont exper-
imentez”).¹¹⁷ French shared some of Ruland’s interest in secrets, but only in obtaining them and testing them himself:

*The truth is, most Artists reserve that to themselves, which they know, either out of a desire to be admired the more for their undiscovered secrets, or out of envie to others knowledge. But how far this humour is approvable in them, I leave it to others to judge; and as for my part I have here communicated upon the account of a bare acceptance onely what I have with many years paines, much reading, and great costs known.*¹¹⁸

¹¹³ Heidegger, *Parmenides* (see note 112), 10–14.

¹¹⁴ Testimony from Plato, *Cratylus*, 401e; quoted in *The Presocratics* (see note 2), 80.

¹¹⁵ Ruland, *Lexicon* (see note 13), 145.

¹¹⁶ *The Oxford English Dictionary Online* (see note 70), “magistry,” noun 5.

¹¹⁷ Meurdrac, *La Chymie charitable* (see note 21) E7r.

¹¹⁸ French, *The Art of Distillation* (see note 53), B3v–B4r; italics in the original.

Boyle, who styled himself “the skeptical chymist,”¹¹⁹ nevertheless took great interest in supposed secrets of alchemy.¹²⁰ But Lavoisier worked only with published experiments. He could not have made his own experiments with hydrogen and oxygen had he not been able to reproduce the experiments of Cavendish and Priestly.

The scientific study of water during the early modern period grew out of efforts to understand the restorative powers attributed to mineral waters. They were hampered by lack of instruments that could produce useful measurements, but also by the passion for keeping secrets and by uncertainty about the basic elements of chemistry. Chemists had not forgotten the claim of Thales that water was the “first principle” or the fact that water was the first element named in the Torah.¹²¹ In a final irony, quantum physics suggests the alchemists and early scientists who placed their faith in Moses and Thales were not entirely mistaken. Today’s cosmologists maintain that the Big Bang produced helium and hydrogen, the “water-generating” gas named by Lavoisier. They also think that all the other elements were generated from hydrogen, element #1 in the periodic table.¹²² Moreover, noting the presumed presence of hydrogen throughout the cosmos and the tendency of hydrogen atoms to pair up, they suppose that water is present in areas where temperature allows.¹²³

¹¹⁹ Robert Boyle, *The Sceptical Chymist; or, Chymico-Physical Doubts & Paradoxes* (London: J. Crooke, 1661).

¹²⁰ Principe, *The Aspiring Adept* (see note 78).

¹²¹ Genesis 1:2; for the teaching of Thales, see note 1.

¹²² Martin Rees, *Just Six Numbers: The Deep Forces that Shape the Universe* (New York: Basic Books, 2000), 76–79.

¹²³ Andre Trepanier, *Bright Hole Cosmos and Multi-Bang Dynamics* (Bloomington, IN: Xlibris, 2012), 185–87.



Fig. 1: Frontispiece from the 1687 reprint of Marie Meurdrac's *La Chymie charitable et facile, en faveur des Dames*. Source: Wikimedia Commons.



Fig. 2: Sadler's Wells shown in William Hogarth's "Evening" (1738), part three of his allegorical sequence "The Four Times of Day." Source: Wikimedia Commons.



Fig. 3: Saint Ann's Well in Buxton. Photo by the author.

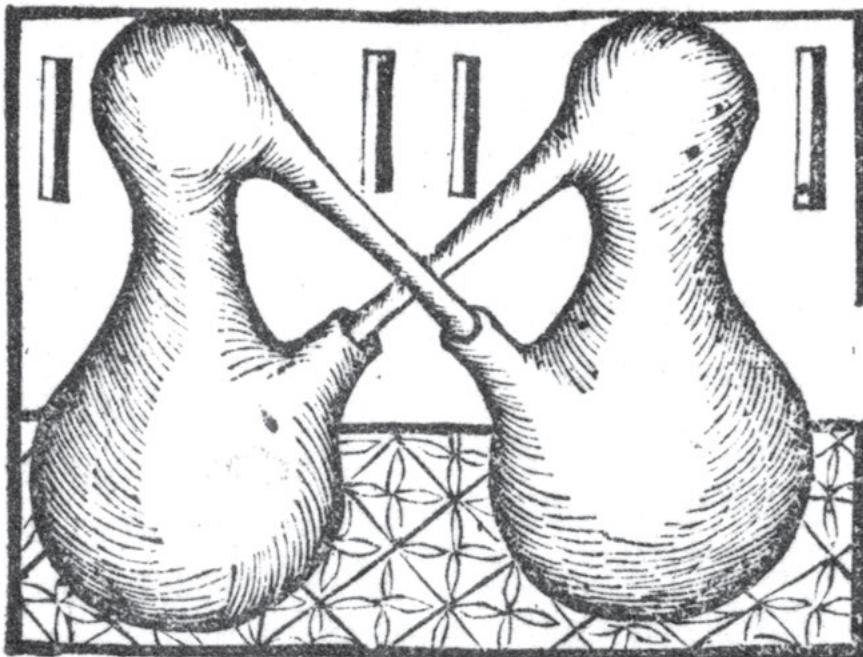


Fig. 4: A pelican, from Hieronymus Brunschwig's *De Arte Distillandi Simplicia et Composita*, 1500. Source: Wikimedia Commons.

List of Contributors

Fabian Alfie is Professor of Italian at The University of Arizona, and he specializes in the comic-satiric literature of the Middle Ages. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin, Madison, in 1995, and has published several books on jocose poetry: *Comedy and Culture: Cecco Angiolieri and Late Medieval Society* (Leeds: Northern Universities Press, 2001); *Dante's Tenzone with Forese Donati: The Reprehension of Vice?* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011); and the complete translation of Rustico Filippi, *The Art of Insult* (Leeds: MHRA, 2014). He has also published numerous articles on the topic, along with studies on Dante, Boccaccio, and Petrarch.

Chiara Benati is Associate Professor of Germanic Philology at the University of Genoa, Italy, where she teaches both Old High German language and literature and Scandinavian Language History. She has published, among others, essays on the Middle Low German influence of the phraseology of the oldest Swedish written sources (*L'influsso bassotedesco sulla fraseologia dello svedese tra Medioevo ed Età Moderna*, 2006), on the Middle High German Dietrich epic and its reception in Scandinavia (*Laurin e Walberan: Introduzione, traduzione dall'altotedesco medio e commento*, 2007). Her current research interests include Middle High German literature, Middle Low German–Scandinavian language contact, Faroese language and literature, and specialized terminology in the earliest (Low) German surgical treatises. This interest in German vernacular surgical sources has resulted, up to now, in the publication of a monograph (*Dat Boek der Wundenartzstedye und der niederdeutsche chirurgische Fachwortschatz*, 2012) and a series of articles on Brunschwig's *Cirurgia* and its Low German adaptation, as well as on the Low German manuscript version of Hans von Gersdorff's *Feldtbuch der Wundarzney* in Copenhagen, GKS 1663 4to ("The Manuscript Version of Hans von Gersdorff's *Feldtbuch der Wundarzney* in Copenhagen GKS 1663 4^o and its Relation to the Printed Tradition," 2013; "Surgeon or Lexicographer? The Latin-German Glossaries in Addendum to Hand von Gersdorff's *Feldtbuch der Wundarzney*," 2013; "Zur Überlieferung von Hans von Gersdorffs *Feldtbuch der Wundarzney*: Die Handschrift Kopenhagen GKS 1663 4^o und ihr Verhältnis zu den Druckfassungen," 2014).

Thomas G. Benedek, M.D., is Professor Emeritus in the Division of Rheumatology at the University of Pittsburgh Medical School. He has also been teaching the history of medicine to undergraduates and medical students for thirty years. He is past president of the American Association for the History of Medicine and vice-president of the International Society for the History of Medicine. His research has focused on the history of the rheumatic diseases and medicine in the Reformation period. In 2012 he published an article on the history of gout ("The Spider and the Gout: The Thousand Year History of a Fable") in *Gutes Leben und guter Tod von der Spätantike bis zur Gegenwart*, ed. Albrecht Classen (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2012), and he contributed "A Comparison of the Psychological Insights of Petrarch and Johann Weyer" to *Mental Health, Spirituality, and Religion in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Age*, ed. Albrecht Classen (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2014).

Christopher R. Clason is Professor of German at Oakland University in Rochester, Michigan. His areas of research include German Romanticism and the Middle Ages. He has authored articles on E. T. A. Hoffmann's novels, Romantic narrative, and the Gothic novel, and then on Gottfried's *Tristan*, Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parzival*, Hartmann von Aue's epic poems, and Walther von der Vogelweide's poetry. He is co-editor of *Literary and Poetic Representations of Work*

and Labor in Europe and Asia during the Romantic Era, Romantic Rapports, and, with Albrecht Classen, collaborator on *Rural Space in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Age* (2012). He is currently editing two collections of essays on Romanticism and on E. T. A. Hoffmann. He has served as the President of the International Conference on Romanticism and the International Tristan Society.

Albrecht Classen is University Distinguished Professor of German Studies at The University of Arizona. He has published more than seventy books, most recently the English translation of the poems by Oswald von Wolkenstein (1376/77–1445) (2008); a book on Sixteenth-Century German Jest Narratives (*Deutsche Schwankliteratur*, 2009); *Tiere als Freunde im Mittelalter*, together with Gabriela Kompatscher and Peter Dinzelbacher (2010), and *The Forest in Medieval German Literature* (2015). Among the volumes that he has edited recently are *Sexuality in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Time* (2008), *War and Peace* (2011), *Mental Health, Spirituality, and Religion in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Age* (2014), and *Death in the Middle Ages and Early Modern time* (2016). A three-volume *Handbook of Medieval Studies* (with Walter de Gruyter) appeared in 2010 (award of the “Outstanding Academic Title” by *Choice*), followed by the *Handbook of Medieval Culture* (3 vols., 2015). In 2008 the University of Arizona bestowed upon him its highest award for research, the “Henry & Phyllis Koffler Award.” In 2004 the German government awarded him with the *Bundesverdienstkreuz am Band* (Order of Merit), its highest civilian award. He has also received numerous teaching and service awards over the last two decades, such as the “Five Star Faculty Award” (2009) and the “Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching 2012 Arizona Professor of the Year Award.” He is serving as editor of the journals *Mediaevistik* and *Humanities—Open Access, Online*. For many years he has been the president of the Arizona chapter of the American Association of Teachers of German, and recently completed his role as President/Past President of the Rocky Mountain Modern Language Association for the third time, only to resume this again in 2015. The RMMLA awarded him with its Sterling Membership Award in 2013, and the Michael Delahoyde Award for Scholarly Editing in 2016.

Sarah Gordon is Associate Professor of French and Associate Department Head at Utah State University, Logan. She earned her degrees at UC Berkeley, Oxford University, and Washington University in St. Louis. Her recent work focuses on literary representations of food and medicine and their relation to French and English medical and household manuals. She is author of *Culinary Comedy in Medieval French Literature* (Purdue 2007). Her current book project is on 14th- and 15th-century multilingual medical manuals in the Huntington library and the notions of wellness, well-being, and prognosis, and cure.

Jean E. Jost is Professor of English at Bradley University, Peoria, IL, where she teaches graduate and undergraduate courses on Chaucer, Arthurian Literature, Old and Middle English surveys, Medieval Drama, and Middle English romance. She has published *Ten Middle English Arthurian Romances; A Reference Guide* and edited a collection called *Chaucer's Humor: Critical Essays*. Currently she is editing the *Southern Recension of the Pricke of Conscience*. Her articles have considered Chaucer's Performative Criseyde, masculinities in the *Friar's and Summoner's Tales*, various Middle English romances (*Amis and Amiloun, Awntyrs off Arthur at the Terne Wathelyne, The Turke and Gowin, Tristan and Isolt*), the poetics of sexual desire in the *Merchants Tale, The Un-Chaucerian Tale of Beryn*, and lately The Gawain Poet. She has regularly contributed to the previous volumes in our series, “Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture.”

Erin S. Lynch is a masters student at the Medieval Institute of Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo. Lynch graduated *summa cum laude* from the University of Texas at Arlington with an honors Bachelors of Arts in History, and concurrent minors in Medieval Studies, Latin, and French in 2014. Her research interests include interdisciplinary approaches to disability history and the lived experience of disease, disfigurement, and disability. Outside of the academy, Lynch's interests include writing political satire, political and social activism, and working on documentaries.

Rosa A. Perez received her Ph.D. from The City University of New York (CUNY) in 2005 with a dissertation on “Martyrs and Moneylenders: Retrieving the Memory of Jewish Women in Medieval Northern France” and has been teaching at Southern Utah University since 2008. She is currently an Associate Professor of French. She has published articles on the interrelations between Jewish and Christian medieval communities. Currently her research has moved to a more recent past to examine how exile has shaped the Jewish communities from Algeria transplanted in France in 1962, and how identity and memory affect novels and other types of texts published in the past fifty years. She has contributed articles to the volumes on *Urban Space* (2009), *Laughter* (2010), and *Rural Space* (2012) in the book series “Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture.”

Daniel F. Pigg is a Professor of English at The University of Tennessee at Martin where he teaches Chaucer, medieval British literature, and history of the English language. He has published widely in English Medieval Studies, ranging from *Beowulf* to Malory's *Works*. He has published articles dealing with various aspects of masculinity in historical contexts in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* and in the presentation of *Beowulf* in various anthologies available to high school students. His most recent publications include an article dedicated to Langland's *Piers Plowman* and Old Age that appeared in the collection of essays arising from the 2006 International Symposium on the Representation of Old Ages in the Middle Ages and Renaissance (ed. Albrecht Classen, 2007). He also published an essay on mercantile masculinity represented in Chaucer's *Cook's Tale* in a collection of essays arising from the 2008 International Symposium on Urban Space (ed. Albrecht Classen, 2009); then on issues of masculinity and sexual performance of Sir Gareth in Malory's *Tale of Sir Gareth* for *Sexuality in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times* (ed. Albrecht Classen, 2008). He has also contributed to the *Handbook of Medieval Studies* (ed. Albrecht Classen, 2010) on scholarly studies of masculinity studies and social constructionism. Moreover, he is also working on a book on the cultural poetics of *Piers Plowman* and on articles on *The Dream of the Rood* and identity formation.

Anne Scott received her B.A. (with honors) from the University of Colorado at Boulder in 1981 and her Ph.D. in English and American Literature from Brown University in 1987, with an emphasis in Medieval Studies. She has published on Chaucer, Middle English romances, saints' legends, and Native-American myth, and on the aspect of fear in medieval literature. She has co-edited volumes of essays on fear, water, and poverty/prosperity in the Middle Ages and Renaissance through Brepols and Brill Publishers over the past 15 years. Holding the title of President's Distinguished Teaching Fellow at Northern Arizona University, she has been heavily invested in administering, and teaching for, the NAU Honors Program, where she has taught interdisciplinary seminars on the human condition as well as courses on James Bond, Alfred Hitchcock, and the idea of identity in medieval and Renaissance literature. As Coordinator of Writing and Academic Enhancement in the Honors Program, she helps train all new instructors

for the Honors Program and works to maintain a high level of engagement in the teaching and learning of writing. In this way, she helps groom many bright students for professional and graduate programs and for their own careers as teachers and scholars.

James L. Smith focuses on intellectual history, medieval abstractions, and visualization schemata, environmental humanities, and water history. He has written on these themes and those of new materialism, the history of the senses, medieval maps and diagrams, medievalisms, and water management in the journal *Other Modernities, Radical History Review, European Review of History, Limina, Parergon, Studies in Medievalism, Postmedieval, and Asia-Pacific Viewpoint*. His 2014 Ph.D. thesis, entitled “Water as Medieval Intellectual Entity: Case Studies in Twelfth-Century Western Monasticism,” is currently under development as a monograph. He is a Research Associate at the University of York Centre for Medieval Studies

Debra L. Stoudt, Ph.D., is Professor of German and Associate Dean in the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. She has published on the lives and works of the medieval German male and female mystics, medieval women healers and the power of healing, and the relationship between magic and medicine in the Middle Ages. She is co-editor with Beverly Mayne Kienzle and George Ferzoco of *A Companion to Hildegard of Bingen*. Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition, 45 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2014), which includes her essay “The Medical, the Magical, and the Miraculous in the Healing Arts of Hildegard of Bingen.”

Scott L. Taylor, Ph.D., J.D., is a retired attorney in Tucson, Arizona, who subsequent to his retirement has taught history and political science at the University of Arizona and Pima Community College, *inter alia*. He has authored a number of papers and articles dealing with aspects of medieval law, particularly its intertexture with culture and society at large, as well as several articles dealing with medieval theology, especially that of Jean Gerson. His reviews have appeared in several publications, including *Theological Studies* and *Mediavistik*. Since 2007, he has been a regular contributor to the Walter de Gruyter book series, “Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture,” edited by Albrecht Classen and Marilyn Sandidge, including the *Handbook of Medieval Studies* (2010) and the *Handbook of Medieval Culture* (2015).

David Tomíček completed his studies of history and Czech language at the John Evangelista Purkyně University in Ústí nad Labem with a Master of Arts (Mgr.) in 2004, and in 2008 his post-graduate studies of the history of medicine (Ph.D.) at the Institute for the History of Medicine and Foreign Languages at the Medical Faculty of Charles University at Prague. Presently, he works as an Assistant Professor at the John Evangelista Purkyně University in Ústí nad Labem and at the Charles University at Prague. His main topic of research interest is the history of science, especially medicine in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. He has published the following monographs: together with Jana Englová, *Jan Evangelista Purkyn* (Ústí nad Labem 2009; in English); *Víra, rozum a zkušenost lidovém lékařství pozdně středověkých Čech* (Belief, Reason and Experience in Folk Medicine of Late Medieval Bohemia; Ústí nad Labem 2010; in Czech); together with Milada Říhová and Dana Stehlíková, *Lékaři na dvoře Karla IV. a Jana Lucemburského* (Physicians at the Court of Charles IVth and John of Luxembourg, Prague 2010; an edition of medieval *regimina sanitatis* with Czech translation and commentary).

Warren Tormey has taught in the English Department at Middle Tennessee State University since 1995. A scholar of Medieval and Early Renaissance Literature by training, he maintains interests in these fields as well as in Milton Studies, the epic tradition, economic history, scientific and technical history, ecocriticism, sports literature, popular culture, and technical writing. Finishing his dissertation on the Epic Underworld in 2008, he has published an article on *Paradise Lost* and has an article forthcoming on the later cantos of Spenser's Faerie *Queene*. He serves his department primarily by teaching upper division writing courses and special topics courses on Modern American Environmental Literature and Modern American Nature Writing. His interest in Anglo-Saxon herbals and medicine stems from a research grant he was awarded in the summer of 2012 with the MARCO Institute at the University of Tennessee.

Belle S. Tuten is the W. Newton and Hazel A. Long Professor of History at Juniata College in Pennsylvania. She is the co-editor (with Tracey Billado) of *Feud, Violence and Practice: Essays in Medieval Studies in Honor of Stephen D. White* (Ashgate, 2010), as well as the author of articles on feud, violence, and medicine. Her publications include "Power and Trauma in the 'Maid of Arras,' *Cantigas de Santa Maria* 105" in Wendy Turner and Christina Lee, ed., *Trauma in Medieval Society* (forthcoming 2016); "Lactation and Breast Diseases in Antiquity: Medical Authorities of Breast Health and Treatment," in the special issue "Woman and Womanhood in the Middle Ages," ed. Piotr Górecki, *Quaestiones Medii Aevi Novae* (2014); "Fashion and Benevolence in Twelfth-Century Western France," in Emilia Jamroziak and Janet Burton, ed., *Religious and Laity in Northern Europe 1000–1400: Interaction, Negotiation and Power* (2006), 41–62; "Who was Lady Constance of Angers? Nuns as Poets and Correspondents at the Monastery of Ronceray d'Angers in the Early Twelfth Century," *Medieval Perspectives* 19 (2004): 255–68; "Women and Ordeals," *Conflict in Medieval Europe*, ed. Warren C. Brown and Piotr Górecki (Ashgate, 2003), 163–174; and "Politics, Holiness and Property in Angers, 1080–1300," *French Historical Studies* 24.4 (Fall 2001): 601–18.

Cynthia White is a Professor in the Department of Classics at the University of Arizona where she is the Director of the Undergraduate Latin Program and supervises Teacher Training and K–12 Latin Teacher Certification. Professor White is a recipient of the Rome Price and spent a year as a Fellow of the American Academy in Rome, where she studied with the famed papal Latinist Father Reginald Foster, O.D.C. She regularly teaches at the *Istituto Internazionale di Studi Classici di Orvieto*, the Classics Department's Study Abroad Program in Orvieto, Italy, and served as the Director of the 2013 Prato Study Abroad Program for the Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies at Monash University. The recipient of several teaching and advising awards, Professor White's book publications include studies in early Christianity and medieval manuscripts, and she has published widely in the areas of Latin pedagogy, classical and early Christian marriage texts, medieval preaching, and medieval Latin poetry. Professor White serves as a national consultant for the College Board, on the Executive Board of the American Classical League, and on the editorial board of several prestigious journals.

Thomas Willard is Professor of English and Religious Studies at the University of Arizona, in Tucson. He has published essays on the relation of literature and ideas, primarily in the late medieval and early modern periods, along with an edition of the alchemical writings of Jean d'Espagne (New York and London 1999). His occasional essays on aspects of Rosicrucianism have appeared in *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* (1984), *Theorien vom Ursprung der Sprache* (1989), *Secret Texts: The Literature of Secret Societies* (1995), and

Mystical Metal of Gold: Essays on Alchemy and Renaissance Culture (2007). He has also published essays on twentieth-century literature and on the literary theory of his former teacher Northrop Frye, and has contributed a number of times to two book series edited by Albrecht Classen: “Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture” and “Theophrastus Paracelsus Studien.”

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